November

15 Cents

Everybody's Magazine

FIRE!

It pays Insurance Companies to have fires.

It would pay you to stop them.

Read "The 'Fat' in the Fire"

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The Spirit of Thanksgiving

Prepare Generous Bounty

Pies to Make
Rolls to Bake
Bread to Bake

The Turkey
Is Only Half
The Dinner

Use GOLD MEDAL FLOUR

and Bake the Golden Harvest into Bread

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BREAKING GROUND

by

WILLIAM DALY, JR.

You probably have as one of your neighbors a certain Mr. Smug. In his mental processes he resembles both the ostrich and the Pharisee. He hides his head in the sand of shallowness. He wants none of your discussions of discontent, none of your theories about society. To him, this is a pretty good little world, after all. With comfortable self-satisfaction, he will assert that only the incompetent are raising a hullabaloo. Didn't he start in life as an office boy? Didn't he work his way up unaided? If you pursue him with facts about malpractise in business and politics, he will retort that the wicked, like the poor, are always with us—human nature, you know. It can't be changed.

One of the great obstacles standing in the way of political and economic reform to-day is the fact that Mr. Smug as a neighbor is numerically so strong.

But in spite of the Smugs we really are progressing. We are beginning to discard the explanation that some men are good, some bad, but most of them indifferent; we are beginning to see that a good deal of the fault lies in the structure itself of society.

The present scheme of things was not born, conceived in the minds of men as good. Like Topsy, it just "growed." It is a hodge-podge, an unconscious growth, just as feudalism was.

The last century is the first in history in which there has been a conscious effort on the part of society to reconstruct itself. This fact is one of the most illuminating and encouraging of modern life.

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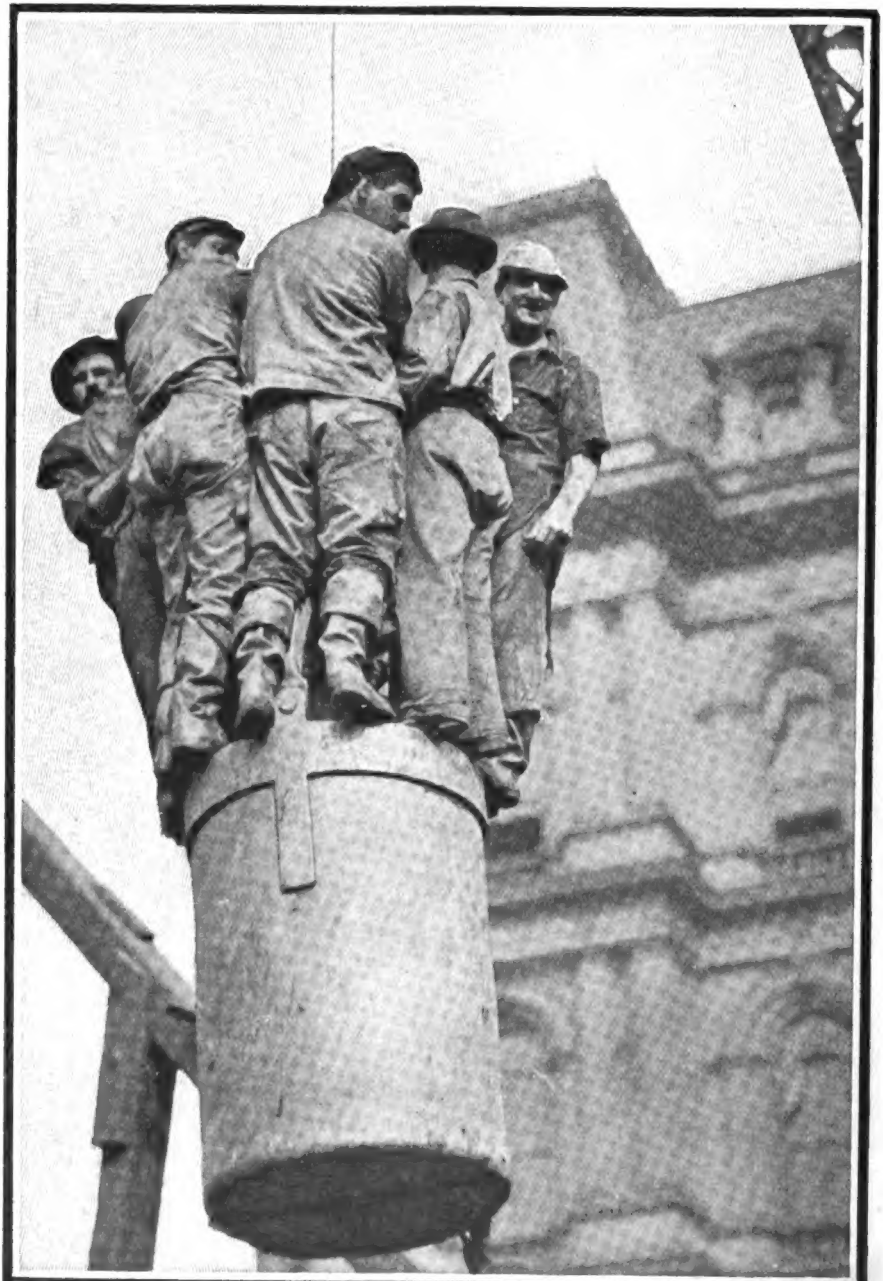

Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York.

"SAND-HOGS" BEING HOISTED FROM A CAISSON. THESE MEN HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR TWO HOURS IN A STEEL TUBE, UNDER A FORTY-POUND AIR PRESSURE.

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Everybody's Magazine

No. 5
1911

JUST WOPS

by

ARNO DOSCH

Lift ye the stone or cleave the wood,
To make a path more fair or flat.
Lo! it is black already with blood
Some Sons of Martha spilled for that.
KIPLING.

PAST jagged, blasted ends of rock, a hundred feet below, trains were bowling through the greatest railroad cut in the world. So that the Jersey commuter might read his paper right into the terminal and not be stopped by the murk of a tunnel, the Erie had torn Bergen Hill asunder, and the gigantic task was almost done. From the office of the construction engineer on the brink of the precipice it was a thrilling spectacle, and I had come to admire.

"To think," I exclaimed, "that not a man was killed!"

"Who told you that?" asked the young assistant.

"Why, it's here in this report sent to the newspapers by your press-agent. He makes a point of it."

The young assistant smiled. "Well, yes, I guess that's right he replied. "There wasn't any one killed except just wops."

"Except what?"

"Wops. Don't you know what wops are? Dagos, niggers, and Hungarians—the fellows that did the work. They don't know anything, and they don't count."

He said it lightly, as to one who would understand. I was "his kind," and he took it for granted that I had his point of view. To me, too, he presumed they were wops—just wops. Not men—wops. A negligible quantity. Unintelligent, sweating creatures who could be killed without counting. Low brutes who worked hard with their hands for a dollar and a half a day. Food for powder. Just wops.

It struck me there was a story in these wops, and, searching, I found it—every-

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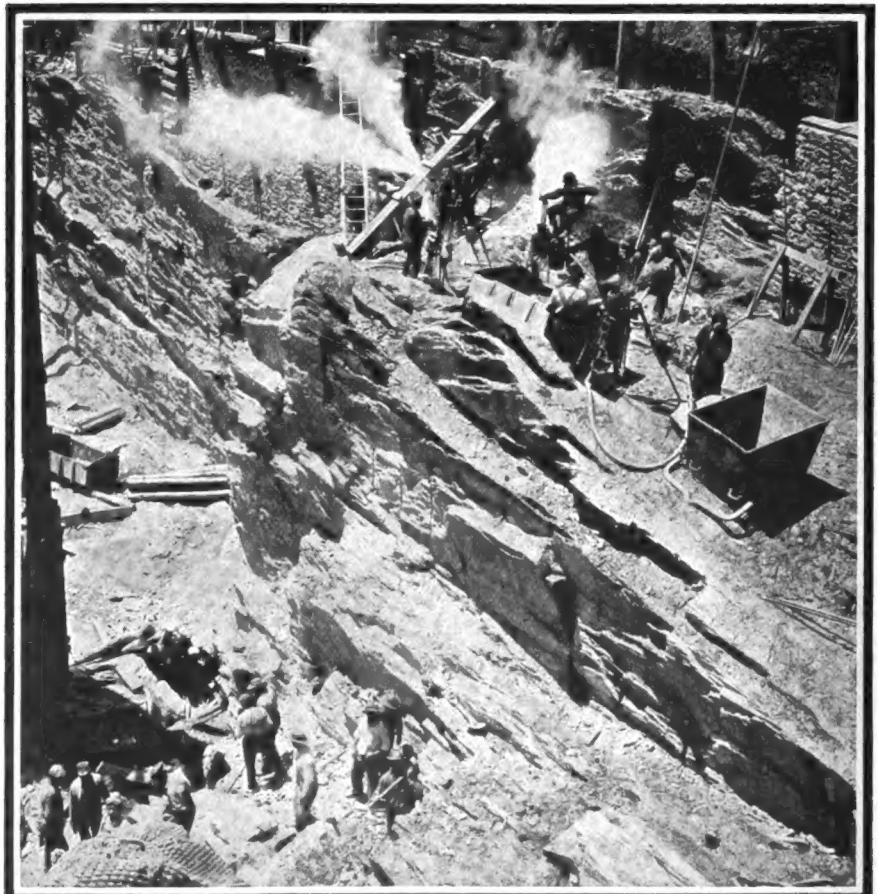
where. It lay hid in the subcellar of society, in fields afar, in splendid cities boasting of their philanthropy. It came into the open and flaunted itself with talk about "the complexities of civilization" and the glib utterance—"Modern industry must have its victims." And everywhere it met a dull apathy, an unthinking acceptance of the assumption that the killing of wops is a necessary blood sacrifice to our comfort.

I began by trying to find out how many wops were killed in the Erie cut. But I have been trying for months, and I have not yet learned the exact number. I never expect to know it. No one knows. The cut is only ten minutes by tube from New York City, and yet there is no record worthy of the name. The nearest approach to adequate information I found in certain newspapers. In April, 1909, when completion was still a year distant, the *Hudson County Observer* published a partial list of the killed and injured. *It filled four columns.* The total number of the dead can not even be estimated. I know of twenty-five. These were either killed instantly or died within a few days. Those who lingered and were carried away by friends were never



Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York.

BLASTING THE ROCK OVER WHICH A SKYSCRAPER WILL STAND. NO RECORD IS KEPT OF THE NUMBER OF "WOPS" KILLED AND INJURED IN THIS KIND OF WORK.

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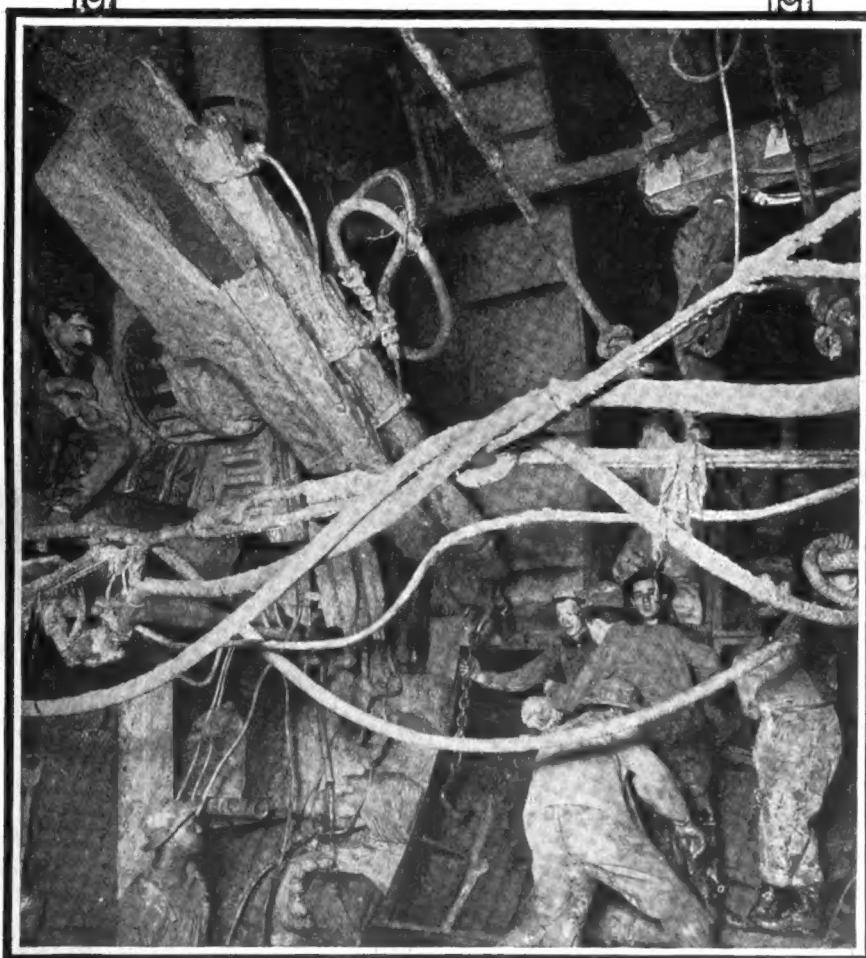

Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York.

BORING THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD TUNNEL UNDER THE EAST RIVER BEHIND A GREAT STEEL SHIELD WHICH IS PUSHED ALONG AS THE EXCAVATORS ADVANCE. THE SHIFTS HAVE TO BE VERY SHORT, BECAUSE HEART AND LUNGS WILL NOT LONG ENDURE THE HEAVY AIR PRESSURE.

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Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York.

DUMPING REFUSE FROM SCOWS INTO THE OPEN SEA—VERY DANGEROUS WORK, IN WHICH "WOPS'" LIVES "DON'T COUNT."

scored against the cut, but were put in the list of miscellaneous injured, which contained hundreds of names. (And the most remarkable thing about this tremendous undertaking, said the press-agent, was that it did not cost a single life!)

Yet I liked these men who talked so indifferently of the wops. I liked the young assistant. I liked the engineer. And I liked the old blasting foreman. Especially did I like that old blasting foreman. A big, two-fisted Irishman, good-natured, smiling, a man who gets things done. I was told that every railroad contractor in the country bids for his services. He is said to be the best blasting foreman in the United States. He wastes no time. He spares no dynamite.

"So you kill a man occasionally," I remarked to him.

"Oh, they get bumped," he replied, "if they don't get out of the way."

And that was all he had to say on the subject.

But there was light to be had elsewhere, in other lines of work, on this matter of killing workmen.

Last spring when the new Municipal Building was being erected on Park Row in New York, the steel skeleton had reached the third floor before the first man was killed, and the contractors marveled. This was the record for big buildings in New York. It is commonly understood that for nearly every floor of every skyscraper that goes to make up Manhattan's picturesque skyline, a man gives up his life.

Closer figures are not obtainable. No one, in fact, has any at all. Ten times as many men might have been killed, and yet there would have been not only no authority to prevent the outrage, but no record of the slaughter.

When the Employers' Liability Commission, appointed by Governor Hughes, discovered this, it was aghast.

"In all the large number of immense skyscrapers erected in New York City," it recorded, "not an accident or an injury that takes place is reported to any one (except to the coroner in immediately fatal cases) —[the text reads: except the coroner's investigation of fatal cases]—from the time the first shovelful of dirt is thrown out until the last slate is put on the roof. *Nor can the number of killed and injured in these trades be even approximated.*"

This means all classes of workmen, re-

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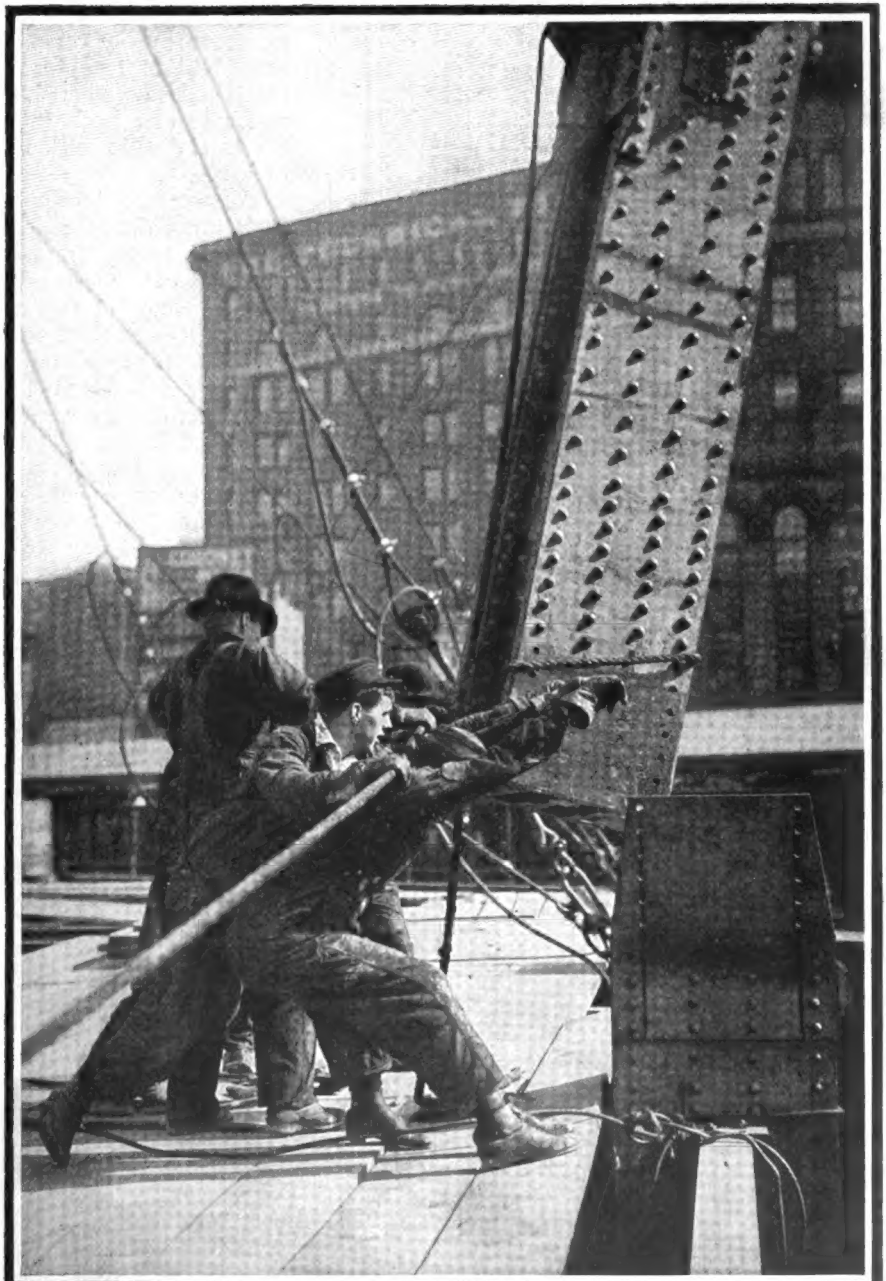

Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York.

IT IS COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR NEARLY EVERY FLOOR OF EVERY SKYSCRAPER THAT GOES TO MAKE UP MANHATTAN'S PICTURESQUE SKY-LINE, A MAN GIVES UP HIS LIFE.

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Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

ON THE STEEL FRAME OF A SKYSCRAPER.

member—not wops alone. It includes men who at least have organizations to speak for them. The wops have not even that. And if the number of the dead among ordinary workmen is not worth counting, imagine the indifference to the fate of wops!

Even the workmen have become hardened. In all building operations, when a man is killed, it has been the custom for the others to stop for the day to recover from the shock. But accidents among the wops have become so common that this custom is no longer observed when they are the victims. From ironworker to stonemason the word is passed, "Just a wop"—and the job goes on.

The men who dump refuse from scows into the open sea also "don't count."

These scows are towed out regardless of weather, and as the tows plunge head-on into the green rollers, and the tow-line tautens, solid masses of water sweep the scows from end to end. Even sailors seldom know anything so bad. But the greatest danger comes at the dumping-ground, where the scowman must run along a greasy, slippery, twelve-inch plank, to knock out the traps. The scows roll and plunge and are hampered by their tow-lines in a free sea action. Worst of all is when the tugboat swings around and, anxious to be back in harbor, cracks the whip with its string of scows.

To give the scowmen some little protection, Congress passed a law two years ago compelling scow owners to rig a support along the narrow gangway. Of course it had not occurred to the owners to provide anything of the kind of their own initiative. They even objected to it, and had a lawyer before the congressional committee. Wherever some one is trying to aid humanity, there is always an owner's lawyer to object. This particular objector gave as his reason that the scowmen did not need the ropes.

Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York.

GOING DOWN INTO A CAISSON.

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"Why," he said, "they will cut any rope and tie one end around their waist and fasten the other end to the scow, and they will run all around there like a lot of rats, and if a wave happens to strike them and they go overboard they pull themselves up on the rope."

The lawyer seemed to consider this a perfect argument against further protection. But he had never been washed overboard and faced death in a heavy sea against the slimy side of a scow. Outside New York harbor, where forty scows are dumped every day of the year, the inspecting Government tugs have long been in the habit of standing by while the scowmen make their perilous runs along the twelve-inch plank, and they have saved so many that they have lost all count.

Here again there is no certain way of finding out how many men lose their lives. The scows do not clear from the custom-house, nor are the owners responsible to the adjoining states. There is no possibility of an investigation, no call for a coroner's jury, no report of men lost. Frequently the men are employed with the utmost informality—picked up in a hurry on the wharf at night, told how to knock open the trap doors, and promised a dollar and a half if they get back. Some scowmen become accomplished gymnasts. But what about the poor wop who goes out into a nasty sea on his first trip?

A storm is regarded as rather a boon—to the owners. The solid seas wash a good deal of the load overside, and, on the plea of saving life and property, the traps are ordered opened long before the dumping ground is reached. At such times the sea is at its meanest, but there is not even a Government tug standing by.

The new law applies only to scows. The men on sea-going barges are liable to much greater dangers, but they are only partly protected; and those on barges for inland waters which put out into dangerous ocean passageways, such as that around Point Judith, at the entrance of Narragansett Bay, are not protected at all. In consequence, numbers of men are lost every year on the Atlantic coast in barge accidents.

Passengers fare very well these days. On account of the rigid inspection of steamers, the loss on the North Atlantic coast last year was only an average of one in twenty-one millions. But the barges, which carry the bulk of the freight, are, under the law, only half inspected. All the equipment required is a boat, a life-preserver for each person, and an anchor and chain. Government officers examine the hulls once a year, but they have no right to inspect the tow-lines and the bits—the most important things. These may be in a dangerous condition, but no one has authority to stop their use.

For this reason seventeen lives were lost from Philadelphia & Reading barges one night last January off Cape Cod. The exact cause of the barges' breaking away could not be determined, for they went down; but it was plain that, if more careful inspection had been permitted, the loss could have been avoided. Government officers constantly exceed their authority in ordering repairs made, yet coal barges rarely live to be considered unseaworthy. You seldom see them rotting in the bone-yards. They are kept running until they founder.

These sea matters are out of our ken. But much worse conditions exist right under our noses. Our eyes, however, are dazzled by the brilliance of the accomplishment in which they are involved. We see the smooth-running railroad, the towering building, all the polished exterior of civilization; we can not see that they are "black with blood."

There is the terminal being built for the New York Central in New York City. It is one of the wonders of the age. It has been in the course of construction for seven years, and the excavating is still going on. Years more will be necessary to complete it. But, in the end, the unsightly yards will give way to avenues and handsome buildings; the terminal will be completely below the surface, operated by electric engines, and no longer a scar across the face of the city. Moreover, it will be the last word in convenience and one of the most patent evidences that "the world does move."

But does it? That hole has been a slaughter-house. Rarely has a piece of excavating work been carried on in such defiance of humanity. When a coroner's jury censured the contracting company for its carelessness, the coroner pointed out that the toll of the dead and seriously injured was *a man a day*. Stop and consider that.

In the very heart of the greatest American city, while throngs hurried by above and did not know or care, *every twenty-four*

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hours a man was needlessly sacrificed.

And little good would it have done the throng if it had stopped and objected. Until last year there was no law that could reach the contractor. Even the police did not get a record of the accidents. Without breaking the law in any way, the company was able to hide many of the deaths it caused. For, under the rulings of the Public Service Commission, if a man is not killed instantly, or does not die within three days, it is only necessary to list him as "injured."

Nothing was ever done to stop the slaughter at the Grand Central Station. A more humane company later took over the job, but that was a matter aside. Nothing is ever done in these cases. Even when the Erie cut had been turned into a shambles, no public notice was taken, and the terrible state of affairs that existed there might never have come to be known at all if one day a piece of rock had not been blown out of the cut and into a house, where it killed a woman.

As long as the killing was confined to wops, there was no interference; but the death of some one not connected with the work was another matter, and there was a great hue and cry. The district attorney made loud threats as to what he was going to do; but after all nothing effective was done. The grand jury returned an indictment against the company merely for main taining a nuisance, the company finally pleaded *non vult*—meaning that it did not intend to do it—paid a fine of five hundred dollars, and the slaughter went grimly on.

It would seem as if it were somebody's business to put a stop to such practises. Here is something which may throw a little light on the subject:

So many Italians were being killed in this country a few years ago that the Italian Government instructed its consuls to investigate. They soon found that they were in for a big undertaking, and built up about each office a whole staff of lawyers and clerks. Their information came from news-items, fellow workmen, relatives in Italy, and, by special arrangement, from city and county records. In New York the consul secured access to the police blotters, and had occasion to exercise it constantly.

But one day a police sergeant refused the privilege to an agent of the consulate, explaining that the city was involved. This hardly seemed possible, as the man in question had been killed in the construction of the hundred-million-dollar Pennsylvania station. The concern doing the work was named the New York Contracting Company, Pennsylvania Terminal. Nothing but its well-known political affiliations seemed adequate to explain why public officials did so much to protect private interests. The record was finally produced, but no satisfactory reason for having at first refused it could be obtained.

In the past few years we have been kicked into a slow, stupid consciousness of employers' liability, but we have not thought of the wops. Even the Employers' Liability Commission closed its painstaking report in New York a few months ago with only a few casual references to them. With all the power and machinery at its command, it was unable to break through the crust under which the wops grope darkly toward their graves.

It is easy to understand why. The wops are never considered as individuals, but are herded together wherever they congregate and shipped out to any point where they are needed. It may be a fever camp, a swamp, or a piece of dangerous construction work right around the corner—they go without question, in groups, as they are ordered. There is a rather sickly humor about this when you consider the derivation of the name by which they are known. For "wop" is merely the corruption of *guappi*, which means a dandy, a somewhat dashing fellow, and conveys the notion of a polished rascal not above sticking a knife in your back.

Poor wops! How far have they fallen from their name! Until very recent years employment agents used to collect fees from them and send them to places where there was no work. And, in spite of stringent laws, there are still parts of this country where it is the rule to have three crews—one coming, one going, and one at work. All three are robbed at every turn. But, mostly, labor is hard to get in isolated camps, and the contractors are anxious to keep the workers. They have even gone so far as to force them to work.

A gang of Italian laborers was sent out of New York in April, 1909, to what was described to them as farm labor; but when they arrived at their destination, in North Carolina, they found themselves in a construction camp of the South & Western

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Railway. Once there, they saw nothing for it but to work; tunneling, however, finally palled on them, and a large party started to leave. The camp superintendent, having no other means of stopping them, called upon the sheriff of McDowell County to help him bring them back. Ambuscaded on the road, as they were leaving, the Italians opened fire on the sheriff and his posse, and two men were killed. For that, nine of the Italians remained months in jail but the justice of the peace held that there was not sufficient cause for arresting any of the party that had made up the ambuscade. In the trial of the Italians it was brought out that this was not the first time the camp superintendent had gone out and driven back laborers at the point of the pistol.

A state of peonage also existed at one time in the railroad construction camps back of Valdez in Alaska. Men sent in from Seattle were worked just enough to keep their board bills paid, and, as this amount was deducted from their pay checks, they had no money until the end of the season, when they were permitted to do enough to buy their passage out again. For their summer's work they had absolutely nothing.

In recent years the cleverest scheme evolved for keeping wops in bondage has been done away with in most states. Instead of paying their men when the money was due, contractors used to issue drafts on themselves dated several months ahead. These were not negotiable, and, if the men left, they had to travel back to the contractor's office or sell the drafts at a discount of from twenty per cent. up. In California, where this abuse proved the most obnoxious, one large firm issued drafts payable a year ahead, and cashed them on the spot at a discount of fifty per cent.

It took a tragedy to put an end to this practise:

A laborer employed by the Gray Brothers Crushed Rock Company of San Francisco received one of these drafts May 18, 1909, and could not see why he had to wait until July 19 for his money. On the first of July, when he thought he had waited long enough, he went to the pretty young woman who stood between the members of the firm and their enraged employees, and demanded what was due him; when she refused, he shot her. The death of the girl brought about the enacting of a law in California regulating pay-days. Without this, the evil might have flourished indefinitely; a bill covering the point had, in fact, been shelved at the preceding session of the legislature.

And now that the employment agencies and pay-days are being attended to, we have the *bordante*, the boarding-house keeper. He hangs on the flanks of the construction armies and agrees to provide men to the contractors on condition of having the board and lodging privilege. He gets his men from the agencies, and everything is regular and according to law; but he frequently takes back the agents' fees from the wages of the men, instead of paying them himself, and they are too ignorant to object. Even the sailor boarding-house keeper never had a better scheme for collecting blood money. He charges them all he dares, too, for their food, and houses them miserably. Last year, when the census was being taken, an enumerator found the house of a *bordante* in Passaic, New Jersey, which registered three hundred and fifty names. The men slept in shifts, and the beds were never empty more than five minutes at a time. Under such conditions the wops sicken after a few days and leave. Then a new gang comes to be bled.

When they are killed, that's the end. Sometimes an inconvenient relative comes around and talks damages, but there are ways of getting rid of him. For instance:

At Suffern, on the Erie, two young Italians were killed and, as they were known on the company's books only by number, no attempt was made to find out who they were or to inform their relatives. Even the coroner contented himself with their numbers. They were just wops—ignorant foreigners. Months later, their wives in Italy and their old, dependent parents wrote to the Italian consul in New York, and he finally identified the two nameless bodies in the Potter's Field; but by this time it was too late to secure any settlement.

It is not merely their ignorance, however, that makes it safe to kill wops. The fact that it is next to impossible for them to get justice in the courts is a help. Listen to the case of Gennaro Dellapia:

He was a longshoreman in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Pier 29, North River, in New York. A loose plank gave way under him while he was carrying a sack of sand, and he was drowned under the sack. A married sister in this country

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was appointed administratrix, but the suit for damages was dismissed. Then the father, who had been supported by his son, scraped up enough money to reach New York.

"This is the great America, the free country," he said, with emphatic gestures to his consul. "Here I shall have justice."

The consul was not so certain about that, but lent his assistance. The old man's faith was pathetic, and an extra effort was made on that account; but it took from June, 1909, till the following April to collect $28.85 due his son in wages when he was killed. Beyond that, the father got nothing.

A better way to avoid the consequences of killing wops lies in deception. They are so simple and trusting that they will believe anything any one may be mean enough to tell them. For the claims-agents they are easy marks.

When Galogero Pellettieri was killed, a cousin appeared at the office of the company to tell about his destitute wife. The handsome building which he entered impressed the cousin with the company's substantiality, and the suave manners and smooth talk of the claims-agent won his confidence.

When months had gone by without the company's offering to settle, the cousin returned, but was reassured. Once, later, he threatened to sue, but the claims-agent told him this would prejudice his case with the company. "Better leave it to me," he said. Two years slipped by, and then the cousin found that he could no longer get to the claims-agent. The statute of limitations for the Employers' Liability act had barred prosecution.

The casualty insurance companies know all the fine points of this game. They insure employers against their own negligence and have remarkable success in dealing with the victims of this negligence. Their whole business may be said to be based on the slowness of the courts in bringing damage suits to trial. This is such a common scandal that even the wops know it, and when a casualty insurance agent comes to secure a release by offering ready money, his best argument is that a suit is hopeless. He offers to settle, however, only where he fears the company will lose. In most cases he can rely on the courts to defeat justice.

Figures that the casualty insurance companies furnish show how the case stands:

The ten largest companies collected $23,523,585 in premiums during the years 1906, 1907, and 1908, but paid to injured men and their widows only $8,559,795, a little over one-third. In other words, injured workmen received, on the whole, one-third of what they would have received if their employers had distributed among them premiums paid to the insurance companies. The rest went to pay dividends, lawyers' fees, salaries of the wily claims-agents, and "expenses." . The London Guarantee and Accident Company paid damages in only twelve per cent. of its cases; the Ætna Life Insurance Company paid 11.46 per cent., and the United States Casualty paid 7.75 per cent. It is quite obvious that these companies have good claims-agents.

Just exactly where they stand has been shown by F. H. McLean for the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities. In a great mass of accidents he was able to learn something definite about only 223 cases; among these "some sort of settlement or donation" had been made in just forty-seven cases—one-fifth of the whole.

All these matters, it may be surprising to learn in this country, have come up for discussion during the past winter in the Italian Parliament. Austria-Hungary has also directed the attention of its consuls to the wrongs suffered by its subjects in this country. But the Italians have been hit the hardest. A formal protest will be made on one form of injustice.

This is the law of Pennsylvania which prevents a widow or an orphan living in another country from securing compensation for the loss of husband or father here—a law that is a remnant of the common law come down from the Middle Ages. It was long ago remedied in England by Lord Campbell's Act, and most of the states in this country have corrected it; but in Pennsylvania, where there is the greatest need of a remedy, on account of the large number of foreign residents, nothing has ever been done.

The particular case which has caused the trouble is that of Carmine Maiorano, who was killed at Laurel Run on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, December 23, 1903. His wife in Italy, who was left with two little children, started an action for damages, but it was thrown out of court. There was no statute in Pennsylvania under which she could sue. A test case was made of it,

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and only last fall the Supreme Court of the United States held that she had no rights! In the year 1910 she was the victim of the kind of injustice which passed current in the Dark Ages.

As a matter of fact, the law always lags behind justice. There could not be a better example of this than the profitless efforts of the Wainwright Commission in New York. It did a masterly piece of work and framed an employers' liability law that met the man-to-man standard of justice; but the Court of Appeals in New York felt impelled to declare it unconstitutional.

This decision may be very good law, but it leaves unmet a crying need in a world where the accidents that happen from day to day are not even kept track of. As things stand, to kill a wop means so little that it is even too much of an effort to get his name straight, if indeed any name at all is recorded.

One Pietro Salvagni was lost to his relatives until his name was found in a coroner's records as Peter Sullivan. If Pietro had not written a letter the day before he was killed, he would never have been found. Calogero Salerno had a headboard to his grave marked J. C. Seller. Luigi Grandi was buried as Lewis Grant.

There is a certain advantage in having these men die nameless and unidentified. Near Hackensack, on the Erie, Concetto Laferta was killed last year, and some time afterward the Italian consul, at the request of his relatives, ferreted out the fact and asked the railroad whether it was willing to settle out of court.

"But the case is already settled," replied the railroad lawyer; "an administrator was appointed and damages were awarded."

When the papers were produced, the administrator proved to be an undertaker, and the damages, for which a full release was given, consisted of fifty dollars, the cost of the funeral! This case was unusual only in the small amount of the undertaker's bill. Or perhaps the railroads have the undertakers trained. It is common custom in many parts of this country to give letters of administration to the undertaker as the chief creditor, and this has too often worked a terrible hardship to those dependent on the dead man.

It has become a regular part of the undertaking business to secure the bodies of wops, learn whether they had any money in the bank, and, if they had, bury them in a style in proportion to the amounts indicated in their pass-books. Of course this is a straight steal, but the sufferers are so far away that there is not much danger of trouble from them. Recently the consul-general of Italy has sent an official notification to all probate judges, asking that the practise of making the undertaker the administrator be discontinued, and that not more than fifty dollars be paid to the undertaker.

These human vultures have gone to appalling lengths. A young Italian, who supported his old mother, stopped sending her remittances; and the Italian consul, when appealed to, found his name in the coroner's records in New York. Among his effects was a pass-book showing that he had had $233.30 in a certain Italian bank. This sum would have been a great boon to the old woman; but when the consul inquired about it at the bank, he was told that it had all been paid out. The bank, however, could not produce an order of the court to account for its action. The fact was that the undertaker, having found out exactly how much the Italian had, made out his bill for every cent of it, and the money was paid to him by the bank without question!

In another case where the pass-book, taken from the body, showed $407, the undertaker got only $378. After he had charged $100 for a casket, $80 for flowers, $75 for carriages, and $123 besides, he seems to have lost his nerve.

A dead wop's slim savings have small chance, indeed, of helping out those far-away dependents whom even a wop may regard as his "loved ones;" for the undertaker is not the only one who takes toll—though often the others are merely the undertaker under other masks. Michael Angelo Parvello, wop, late of Alleghany County, Maryland, had, by constant personal sacrifice, accumulated $413.34 in the bank. Of this Louis Stein as funeral director took $104.25, and as administrator $22.32 in fees. All the rest, except $76.29, went to funeral expenses, the coroner, the registrar of wills, and the doctor. The smallest item of all was the hospital bill of six dollars.

The young assistant was right. The wops don't know anything, and they don't count.

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THE SQUIRREL CAGE

BY DOROTHY CANFIELD

Author of "GUNHILD," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN ALONZO WILLIAMS

SYNOPSIS OF FIRST INSTALMENT:

The story opens with the return of Lydia Emery from a year abroad—a year that is the climax of an elaborately useless boarding-school education, and the preface to her entrance into Endbury society. During the first rapturous inspection of the house, which has been made ready for her "coming out," the girl is specially ecstatic over a new sofa. This, it turns out, has been made by Daniel Rankin, a young man who has outraged Endbury by withdrawing from business to become a cabinet-maker and live in the woods. He has dropped out of society, and the Emerys, in talking to Lydia, dismiss him as "crazy." Lydia, however, remembers having met and liked him. On the day after her return she meets him twice — first in the magical quiet and freshness of the early morning in the Emerys' garden, and then on the stairway of the house, where Rankin is at work. In response to the girl's questioning, Rankin explains to her the purpose of his withdrawal from the "squirrel cage" of Endbury's social and business competition, whose standards are fixed by what "every one else has and does." Lydia, who has herself an instinct for essentials but has accepted her family's ideals unquestioningly, is bewildered, but deeply interested. While she is still struggling with these new ideas, the doctor—who is also her godfather—tells her that her mother is seriously ill with a form of what Dr. Melton calls "social-ambitionitis."

CHAPTER VII—OUTSIDE THE LABYRINTH

THE Black Rock woods lay glowing under the cloudy autumn sky like a heap of live coals, the maples still quivering in scarlet, the walnuts sunk into a clear yellow flame, the oaks, parched by the September heat, burnt out into rusty browns. Above them the opalescent haze of October rose like a faint blue smoke, but within the woods the subdued light was richly colored like that which passes through the stained-glass of a great cathedral. The first of the fallen leaves lay in pools of gold in the hollows of the brown earth where the light breezes had drifted them. It was for the moment singularly quiet, so that, as Lydia loitered along the foot-path, the pleasant rustle of her progress was the only sound she heard. The path turned sharply after passing through a thicket of ruddy brambles, and she found herself in a little clearing which the haze of the upper air descended to fill.

Through this she saw a rough little house, brown as an oak-leaf, with a wide veranda, under which, before a work-bench, sat Daniel Rankin. His tanned arms moved rhythmically backward and forward, but his ruddy head was high, and his eyes, roving about the leafy walls of his clearing, caught sight of Lydia as soon as she had turned the corner. He sprang up from his seat and walked toward her, smiling.

"Oh, Miss Emery!" he called welcomingly. "I didn't recognize you for a minute. Every once in a while a young lady, or a child, loses her way from a picnic in the woods and stumbles into my settlement. I am so glad that this time it's you."

Lydia moved on. "My picnic party's gone home," she explained. "It was only Marietta and her little boy, anyhow. My sister thought it was going to rain and took the quickest way home. I told her I'd walk across and catch the Garfield Avenue trolley. I must have taken a wrong turn in the path."

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"YOU SAY BEAUTIFUL THINGS!" HE REPLIED QUIETLY. "MY ROUGH QUARTERS ARE GLORIFIED TO ME!"

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They had reached the veranda now, and Lydia sank into the chair which Rankin offered. She smiled her thanks silently, her face still steeped in quiet ecstasy, and for a long time said nothing.

Rankin also said nothing, looking at her reflectively, and stroking his close-clipped red beard. In the silent interval of the girl's slow emergence from her reverie, his gaze upon her was so steady that when Lydia finally glanced up at him, he could not for a moment look away. The limpid unconsciousness of her eyes changed into a startled look of inquiry as though he had spoken. Then a flush rose to her cheeks, and she began to talk at random:

"So this is where you live! It's lovely. It looks like a fairy-story—the little house in the woods, you know. Nothing seems real to-day—the woods—they are so beautiful they make me want to cry! I've been so hungry for outdoors. You know poor mother is sick, and though she's not so awfully sick and of course we have a trained nurse for her, still I've had to be housekeeper and I haven't had time to breathe! The second girl left that first day because of the extra work sickness makes, and it seems to me we've had a million new second girls in the three weeks. It's been awful. I haven't had time to get out at all or to see anybody."

She was quite herself now and confided her troubles with a naive astonishment at them as though they were quite new to humanity. "It's perfectly desperate," she went on. "I haven't had a single minute's peace. This afternoon I just got wild and ran away from it for a while. Father's nice about it, but he says that mother doesn't have to change more than two or three times a year!" She presented this, evidently, as the superlative of stability.

Rankin laughed. Lydia felt more and more at her ease. He was evidently thinking of her pretty looks and ways more than of what she was saying, and, like all of her sisterhood, this was treatment which she thoroughly understood. She went on, "And so this is where you work?"

"I work everywhere," he told her. "I do all that's done here, you see."

"You must have quite a way to walk to your meals, don't you?" she asked.

Rankin's mouth twitched humorously. "You'll never understand me," he said. "I get my own meals, myself, here."

Lydia turned on him sharply. "You don't *cook!*" she cried out, horrified.

"And wash dishes and make my bed and sweep my floor and, once in a great while, when Dr. Melton is coming to make me a visit, I even dust."

The romantic curiosity in the girl's eyes died out into a shocked wonder.

Rankin threw back his head and laughed aloud. The sound of his mirth was so infectious that Lydia laughed with him, though half uneasily. He explained: "It's awfully funny to see the picture of myself I gather from your shocked and candid eyes. I'm so used to my queer ideas that I forget that what seems perfectly natural to me still seems perfectly crazy to other folks."

"Well, not *crazy*—" Lydia proffered this negation with so halting an accent that Rankin burst out in another peal of laughter.

"But it *must* be horrid for you to wash dishes and cook!" pouted Lydia, resentful that her inculcated horror of a man's "lowering himself to woman's work" should be taken with so little seriousness. She tried to rearrange a mental picture, which the other was continually destroying. "But I suppose it's very picturesque in the evenings. You cook over an open fire, I imagine?"

"I cook over the best brand of oil-stove that money can buy," he told her relentlessly, watching her wince from the sordid image, with a humorous glint in his eye. "I have all the conveniences I can think of. Don't you see, all I'm trying to do is to get myself fed with the least expenditure of gray matter and time on my part; and as things are now arranged in this particular corner of the country, I find I can do it best this way. If anybody'll show me a better, I'll adopt it in a hurry, you can be sure of that. But it's really more work trying to persuade somebody who doesn't want to do it, to wait on me, than it is to jump up and do it myself. Also, having brains, I enjoy cooking, and I certainly *can* cook!"

At this, Lydia was overcome by that openness to conviction from unexpected sources which gave her mother one of her greatest anxieties. "Well, honestly, there is a lot in that!" she said unexpectedly. "I've thought ever so many times in the last three weeks that if father would just let me wait on the table, for instance, I could get on ever so much easier."

"And I'll just bet you," the man went on, "that I've had more time to myself lately than you have, for all I've got my living to

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earn as well as the housework to do."

"My goodness!" cried Lydia, "That wouldn't be saying much for you, for I haven't had a minute—not even to sit and talk with mother as much as I ought."

"What did you have to do that kept you from that?"

"Oh, dear, you're no housekeeper, that's plain, or you wouldn't ask. A man *never* has any idea about the amount of work to be done in a house. Why, I've set the table and swept the parlors and changed the flower-vases and dusted and picked up and dusted and picked up—I don't know what *makes* things get so dusty! Of course I want to keep everything as nice as if mother were up. Everybody expects me to do that."

"But, in order to get time to talk to your sick mother, couldn't you have just left those big rooms filled with objects to dust and let the dust lie on them—even such an awful thing as that?"

Lydia considered this suggestion with honest surprise. "Why, do you know, it never occurred to me that I could do that!"

Rankin nodded. "It's a common delusion," he explained. "I've had it. I have to struggle against it still—the notion that you belong to the things that belong to you."

Lydia looked at him sidewise out of her clear, dark eyes. She was beginning to feel more at home in his odd repertoire of ideas. "I wonder," she mused, "if that's why I always feel so much happier in old clothes—because I don't forget that they're for me and I'm not for them. But really, you know, dressmakers and mothers and folks get you to thinking that you *are* for clothes—you're made to show them off."

Rankin vouchsafed no opinion as to this problem of young-ladyhood. "Here's your sister's rain," he said, instead.

Lydia rose in some agitation. "Oh, I didn't think it really *would!*"

Rankin stood up eagerly. "Oh, I've a chance to do you a service!" he cried.

He led her in, hastened to draw up a chair before the hearth, where a few embers still glowed, and threw on some dry twigs. The flame, leaping up, lighted the corners, already dusky with the approach of evening. "Well, how do you like it?" he asked casually, turning away to a recess in the wall. The girl looked about her in silence and apparently in surprise.

"It's not very tidy, is it?" the master of the house went on, with his back to her, rummaging in the closet, and tumbling out coats and shoes and hats in his haste. Finally, "There!" he said in triumph, shaking out a raincoat. "That will keep your pretty finery dry."

He turned back to the girl, who was sitting very straight in her chair, peering about her with wide eyes and a strange expression on her face.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked, a little startled.

Lydia stood up with a quick, indrawn breath. "I don't know," she said, "what makes me feel so. It seems as though I'd been here before. It looks so familiar to me—so good." She leaned on the table, fingering a pen and looking at him with a shy eagerness. She was struggling, as so often, with an indefinable feeling which she had no words to express. "Don't you know every once in a while you see a face—an old man or woman, maybe, on the street-cars, in a train—and somehow the face goes home to you! Well, it's so with this room. It has a face. I like it so—" She broke off, helplessly inarticulate, and looked timidly at the man. She was used to kindly, amused laughter when she tried, stumblingly, to phrase some of the quickly varying impressions which made her inner life so full of invisible incident.

But Rankin did not laugh, even kindly. His clear eyes were more than serious. They seemed to show him moved to an answering emotion. "You say beautiful things!" he replied quietly. "My rough quarters are glorified to me!"

There was a pause, in which the silence within the house brought out the different themes composing the rich harmony of the rain—the steady, resonant downpour on the roof, the little, sweet whispers of the dried grass under the torrent, the muted thuddings of the big drops on the beaten earth of the veranda, and the liquid overflow of the eaves.

It was still light enough to see the color in the leather which covered the arm-chairs, and the glossy black of a piano, heaped with a litter of music. Near it, leaning against the wall, a violoncello curved its brown crook-neck over the shapeless bag which sheltered it.

Lydia pointed to it. "You're musical!" she said, as if she had made an important discovery. Rankin roused himself, followed

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PAUL STOOD BY HER, LOOKING DOWN INTO HER EYES, BENDING OVER HER, SMILING, CONFIDENT, PRESSING, MASTERFUL.

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the direction of her eyes, and shook his head. "No, I can't play a note," he said cheerfully, laying down the raincoat and going to look over the pile of overshoes in a box. "But I like it. The 'cello and the piano belong to some German friends of mine who have seen better days and who haven't any place to keep them now. Two or three times a week they come out here, and they make music till they fall to crying on each other's necks."

"Do you cry, too?" Lydia smiled at the picture.

Rankin came back to the fire with a pair of rubbers in his hand. "No, I'm an American. I only blow my nose hard," he said.

"Well, it must be lovely!"—she sighed this out ardently, sinking back in her chair. "I love music so it 'most kills me, but I don't get very much of it. I wish I could hear more. But perhaps it's just as well not to, mother says—it always gets me so excited. I'm sure I should cry, along with your Germans."

"They would like that," observed her host, "above everything."

"Father keeps talking about getting one of these player-pianos, but mother says they are so new you can't tell what kind of people are going to go in for them. They may get too common, she thinks."

Rankin looked at her hard. "Would *you* like one?" He asked this trivial question with a singular emphasis.

"Why, I haven't really thought!" said Lydia, considering the matter.

The man looked oddly anxious for her answer.

Finally, "Why, it all depends, of course, on how much music you can make with them. If they are really good, I should want one, certainly."

Rankin smiled, drew a long breath, and fell sober again, as if at a sudden thought.

"It looks nice, now I'm here to see it," Lydia vaguely approved, "though I still don't see why you couldn't have gone on more like other folks and just changed some things—not been so *awfully* queer!"

Rankin answered her briefly: "There *are* occasions when compromise doesn't do any good!"

"Does it do such a lot of good to go off by yourself in the woods and do your own cooking?" asked Lydia, with something of her father's shrewd, home-thrusting accent. "What if everybody did that?"

Rankin laughed. "Everybody'd have a good time, for one thing," he answered, adding, more seriously: "The House of Rimmon may be all right for some people, but my head isn't clear enough. I'd get mixed up as to whom I really was worshiping."

Lydia looked frankly at a loss. She did not belong to the alert, quickly "bluffing" type of young lady. "Rimmon?" she asked.

"He's in the Bible."

"That's a good reason why I never heard of him," she said ruefully.

"All I meant by him is that people who conform outwardly to a standard they don't believe in are in danger of getting most awfully tangled. And certainly they don't stand any chance of convincing anybody else that there's anything the matter with the standard! What's needed isn't to upset everything in a heap, but to call folks' attention to the fact that things could be a lot better than they are. And that's hard to do! And who ever called more people's attention to that fact than an impractical, unbalanced nobleman who took to cobbling shoes for the good of his soul! There wasn't a bit of sense in what Tolstoi *did*, but—" he stopped, hesitating in an uncertainty which Lydia understood with a touching humility.

"Oh, you needn't explain who Tolstoi is! I *have* heard of *him!*"

"Well, you mustn't think I'm anything like Tolstoi!" cried the young man, laughing aloud at the idea, "for I don't take a bit of stock in his deification of working with your muscles. That was an exaggeration he fell into in his old age because he had been denied his fair share of manual work when he was young. If he'd had to split kindlings and tote ashes and hoe corn when he was a boy, I bet he wouldn't have thought there was anything so sanctifying about calluses on your hands!"

"Oh, dear!" complained Lydia. "You're awfully confusing to me! You always seem to be making fun of something I thought, just the minute before, you believed in!"

Rankin looked intensely serious. "There isn't an impression I'd be sorrier to give you," he said earnestly. "Perhaps the trouble is that you don't as yet know much about the life I got out of."

"I've lived in Endbury all my life!" protested the girl.

"There may still be something for you

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to learn about the lives of its men," suggested her companion.

"If you think it's wrong, why don't you reform it?" Lydia launched this challenge suddenly at him with the directness characteristic of her nation.

"I have to begin with reforming myself," he said, "and that's job enough to last me a long time! I have to learn not to care about being considered a failure by all the men my own age who are passing me by, and I don't mind confessing to you that that's not always easy—though you mustn't tell Dr. Melton I'm so weak. I have to train myself to see that the others are really not getting *up* so fast, but only climbing fast over slipping, sliding stones; and then I have to try to find some firm ground where I can make a path of my own, up which I can plod in my own way."

The tone of the young people as they talked with their innocent grandiloquence of these high matters, might have been taken for that of a couple deep in some intimate discussion, so honestly serious and moved was it. There was a silence now, also like the pause in a profoundly personal talk, in which they looked long into each other's eyes.

The clock struck five. Lydia sprang to her feet. "Oh, I must hurry on! I told Marietta to telephone home I'd be there at six."

She preserved still her charming unconsciousness of the unconventionality of her situation. A European girl, brought up in the strictest ignorance of the world, would still have had intuitions to make her either painfully embarrassed or secretly delighted over this impromptu visit to a young bachelor. But Lydia, who had been "allowed to read everything," and to whose youth the only compromises had been fitful attempts of the family "not to talk too much about 'things' before Lydia," was clad in that unearthly innocence which the advancing tide of sophistication has still left in some parts of the United States—that sweet, proud, pathetic conviction of the American girl that evil is not a vital force in any world which she knows. The young man before her smiled at her in an unconsciousness as artless as her own. They might have been a pair of children.

"You've plenty of time," he assured her. "The Garfield Avenue trolley is only five minutes' walk away. Oh, I'm prosaic with my oil-stoves and trolley-cars. I'm afraid there's nothing of the romantic reactionary about me."

They stood on the veranda now, looking into the blue twilight. The rain drummed noisily on the roof, and here the soft swish of its descent into the grass rose to a clear, sibilant note. Back of them the fire lighted up the empty chair Lydia had left.

They plunged into the strip of forest which separated the clearing from the open farming country and the main road to Endbury.

Neither of them spoke during this walk. The rain pattered swiftly, varying its monotonous refrain as it struck the tense fabric of the open umbrella, the leaves of the trees, the little brook which ran beside them, or the stony path. Lydia clung to Rankin's arm, peering about her into the dim caves of twilight with a happy, secure excitement. She thought flittingly of how Marietta would laugh at her manufacturing anything romantic out of the commonplace facts of the insignificant episode, but even as she turned away from her sister's imagined mocking smile, she felt an odd certainty that to Rankin, also, there was a glamour about their doings. It was as though the occasional contact of their bodies as they moved along the narrow path were a wordless communication.

He said nothing, but as they emerged upon the long, treeless road, stretching away over the flat country to where the light of Endbury glowed tremulously through the rain, he looked at his companion with a quick intensity, as though it were the first time he had really seen her.

It was that man's look which makes a woman's heart beat faster, even if she is as inexperienced as Lydia. She was already tingling with an undefined emotion, and the shock of their meeting eyes was an event to her. Her face shone through the half-light as though a lamp had been lighted within.

They stood silently waiting for the car which flashed a headlight toward them, far down the track. As it drew near, bounding over the rails, humming like a great insect and bringing visibly nearer the end of their time together, Lydia was aware that Rankin was in the grasp of an emotion which threatened to become articulate. The steady advance of the car was forcing him to a speech against which he struggled in vain.

Lydia began to quiver. She felt an ex-

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pectancy of something lovely, moving, new to her, which grew tenser and tenser as though her nerves were the strings of an instrument being pulled into tune for a melody. Standing there in the cold, rainy twilight, she had a moment of the exultation she had thought was to be so common in her Endbury career. She felt warmed through with the consciousness of being lovely, admired, secure, supremely fortunate, just as she had thought she would feel; but she had not been able to imagine the extraordinary happiness which this, or some unrecognized element of the moment, gave her.

The car was almost upon them; the blinding glare of the headlight showed their faces with startling suddenness. She saw in Rankin's eyes a tenderness which went to her heart. She leaned to him from the steps of the car to which he swung her—leaned to him with a sweet, unconscious eagerness. In the instant before the car moved forward, as he stood gazing up at her, he spoke at last.

The words hummed meaninglessly in Lydia's ears, and it was not until after some time in the garish white brilliance of the car that she convinced herself that she had heard aright. Even then, though she still saw his ardent face raised to hers, the raindrops glistening on his hair and beard, even though she still heard the fervor of his voice, she remained incredulous before the enigma of his totally unexpected words. He had said with a solemn note of pity in his voice: "Ah, my poor child, I am so horribly, horribly sorry for you."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHADOW OF THE COMING EVENT

JUDGE EMERY looked tired and old as he sat down heavily at his dinner-table opposite his pretty daughter. The discomfort and irregularity of his household during the past three weeks had worn on the nerves of a very busy and fatigued man, who needed all his strength for the work he had set himself to do. It seemed an evil fate of his, he reflected, as he took his napkin out of the ring, that whenever he was particularly hard pressed in his profession, domestic turmoil was sure to set in. He was now presiding over a suit between the city and the Electric Railway Company, involving many intricate details of electrical engineering and accounting methods. Until that suit was settled, he felt that it was unreasonable for his family to expect him to give time or attention to anything else. He was always glad to turn his mind to their problems in the intervals of his own.

However, to-night there were several cheering circumstances. The doctor had left word that in all probability Mrs. Emery would be quite herself in ten days, a shorter time than they had feared; Lydia was really charming in a rose-colored dress which matched the dewy flush in her cheeks; the roast looked cooked as he liked it, which was very well done indeed; and he had heard some warm words that day about the brilliancy of young Paul Hollister's prospects. He took a drink of ice-water, tucked his napkin into the top of his vest, a compromise allowed him by his wife at family dinners, and smiled at his daughter. "Your mother tells me you've had a letter from Paul saying he'll be back shortly," he said, with a jocosely significant emphasis. "I suppose we shall hardly be able to get a glimpse of you after he's in town again."

At this point, beginning to carve the roast, he had a sinking premonition that it was going to be very tough, and, though he heroically resisted the ejaculation of embittered protest which rose to his lips, this magnanimity cost him so dear that he did not think of Lydia again till after he had served her automatically. He took another drink of ice-water before he gloomily began on his first mouthful. It was worse than he had feared, and he was in no mood to be either very imaginative or very indulgent to a girl's whims when Lydia said suddenly and stiffly: "I wish you wouldn't speak so about Paul! I don't know what *makes* everybody tease me so about him!"

Her father was chewing grimly. He interrupted this cheerless process to say: "I don't know why they shouldn't, I'm sure. Young folks can't expect everybody to keep their eyes shut and draw no conclusions. Of course, I understand Paul's not saying anything definite till now on account of your being so young."

Lydia had grown quite pale. She pushed back her plate and looked at her father with horrified eyes. "*Father!* What a thing to say!" she finally cried out. "You make me ashamed to look him—to look *anybody* in the face! Why, I never dreamed of such a thing! I never——"

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"That's your mother's doings. She'd be mad at me now if she knew how I'd spoken right out for once. But you don't want to be treated like a little girl all your life, do you?" He laughed at her speechless embarrassment with a kind obtuseness to the horror with which youth sees its shy fastnesses of reserve laid open to indifferent feet. Divining from his affection for her, however, that she was really more than pleasantly startled by his bluntness, he began to make everything smooth by saying: "There aren't many girls in Endbury who don't envy my little Lydia, I guess. Paul is considered——"

At this point Lydia rose hurriedly and actually fled away from the sound of his voice. She ran up-stairs so rapidly that he heard the click of her heel on the top step before he could draw his breath. He laughed uneasily and set himself to finishing his dinner in a great hurry. Gulping down his dessert in one or two huge mouthfuls, he rose to follow his daughter. He was recalled by the ringing of the telephone-bell, and when he went up-stairs again he was smiling broadly.

With his lawyer's caution he waited a moment outside his wife's room, where he heard Lydia's voice, to see if her mother had hit upon some happy inspiration to quiet the girl's exaggerated maidenly shyness. With a grin of amused satisfaction, he now heard Mrs. Emery saying: "Why, my dear, what is there so terrible in having the handsomest and most promising young man in Endbury devoted to you? You don't need to marry him for years and years if you don't want to—or never, if you don't like him enough." She laughed a little, teasingly: "Perhaps it's all just our nonsense, and he has never thought of you that way. Maybe when he comes to see you, he'll tell you about a beautiful girl in Urbana or Cincinnati that he's engaged to; and *then* what would your silly father say?"

THERE FLASHED SUDDENLY UPON HIM THE MEMORY OF HER APPEALING LOOK.

"Oh, if I could only think that!" breathed Lydia, as though she had been reprieved from a death-sentence. "Of course! Father was just joking! But he gave me a scare!"

"He was probably thinking of his horrid law-business, darling. When a big trial is on, he wouldn't know me from Eve. He says *any*thing at such times!"

Judge Emery laughed noiselessly and quite without resentment at this wifely characterization.

Mrs. Emery went on: "Well, don't think anything more about it, dear. Just be your own sweet natural self when you see Paul. And don't let's talk any more now. Mother gets tired so easily."

Lydia's remorseful outcry over having fa-

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tigued her mother seemed a good occasion for Judge Emery's entrance and announcement. He felt that she would make an effort to conceal any agitation she might feel, and indeed, beyond a startled gasp and a look of fright, she made no comment on his news.

Mrs. Emery herself was more obviously stirred to emotion. "To-night? Why, I didn't think he'd be in town for several days yet, from the way he wrote to Lydia."

"He only got in at five o'clock this afternoon; he just told me over the 'phone."

The two parents exchanged meaning glances over this chronology, and Mrs. Emery flushed and smiled. During the next half-hour she made every effort, heroically though obviously seconded by her husband, to keep the conversation in a light and casual vein; but when the door-bell rang, they all three heard it with a start. Mrs. Emery said, very carelessly: "There he is, dear. Run along, and remember me to him." But she pulled Lydia down to her, straightened a bow on her waist with a twitch, loosened a lock of her shining dark hair, and kissed her with a sudden yearning fervor.

After they were alone, Judge Emery laughed aloud. "You're just as bad as I am, Susan. You don't *say* anything, but——"

"Oh, I know," his wife sighed; "I can't help it." She deliberated unresignedly over the situation for a moment and then broke out: "Oh, go along, and stop and speak to Paul on your way out. Just drop in as you pass the door. The Hollisters are so formal about their girls. We don't want really to chaperon her—nobody does that yet—but—well, you stop in, anyhow. It's borne in on me that that'll look better, after all."

In the midst of his conference with Dr. Melton an hour later, it came upon Judge Emery with a clap that he had forgotten this behest of his wife's, plunged deep in legal speculations as he had been, the instant he turned from her door. He brought his hand down on the table.

"What's the matter?" asked the little doctor, peering up at him.

"Oh, nothing important—women's cobwebs. I'm afraid I'll have to go, though. We can take this up again to-morrow, can't we?"

"At your service," said the doctor; but he pulled with some exasperation at a pile of pamphlets still to be examined.

"It's about Lydia's receiving a call from Paul Hollister and her mother's asking me to step in as I left the house and say good evening—sort of represent the family—do the proper thing."

"See here, Emery"—in spite of his evident wish to exhort, the doctor continued to sit as he spoke. To rise could have given him no perceptible advantage over the tall lawyer.—"See here, do you know that you have a most unusual girl for a daughter?"

"I have heard it said that I have a glimmering notion of her merits," said the other, with a humorous gravity.

"Oh, I don't mean pretty, and appealing; with a good complexion and all that—and I don't mean you don't spoil her outrageously. I mean she's got the oddest make-up for a modern American girl—she's simple."

"I don't see anything odd about her—or simple!" her father resented the adjectives with some warmth.

"Ah, by that I mean she's so wise you'd better look out or she'll find you out! She's as dangerous as a bomb. She has a scent for essentials. By Heaven, I believe she can tell 'em from all our flummery! I'm afraid of her, I tell you!"

Judge Emery broke in, impatient of this fantastic word-bandying. "Oh, come, Melton, I can't stand here while you spin your paradoxes. I've got to get home before young Hollister leaves, or my wife won't like it."

"I'll go with you, then," cried the little doctor, clapping on his hat. "The air's fine these crisp October evenings."

"You let Lydia alone, if you please," said the lawyer, looking down at his friend as the two set off, a stork beside a sparrow. "Talk your nonsense about somebody else. There's nothing queer about Lydia, thank Heaven! She's just like all other young ladies."

"That's a horrible thing to say of one's own daughter," said the doctor.

The judge let this challenge pass with an indulgent laugh. There was a pause until the two stood before the Emery house, looking at the brightly lighted windows of the parlor. The doctor stared at them hard, the light showing his many-wrinkled little face set like a mask of tragedy. When he spoke, his voice trembled: "Oh, Nat, you know what Lydia's always been to me—like my own—so precious—oh, take care of her! See, Lydia's no fighter! She *can't* fight,

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even if she knew what was going on to fight against." His voice broke.

Judge Emery clapped him on the shoulder with a rough friendliness. "No wonder you do such wonders in curing women, Marius! You must know all about their insides. You have the same kind yourself, you nervous old hen! In the Lord's name, what has Lydia to fight against? If there ever was a creature with a happy, successful life before her—besides, don't we all stand ready to do her fighting for her?"

Though the night was cool, the doctor took off his hat and wiped his forehead. He looked up once as though he were about to speak, but in the end he only put his hat back on his head, nodded, and went his way.

As the judge let himself in at the front door, a murmur of voices from the brightly lighted parlor struck gratefully on his ear. He was not too late. "How are you, Hollister?" he called, as he pulled off his overcoat. "Glad to see you back. Let's hear all about the Urbana doings."

Hollister's dramatic interest in each engagement of his steady battle for success was infectious. Those who knew him, whether they liked him or not, waited for news of the results of his latest skirmish as they waited for the instalments of an exciting serial story.

As the older man entered, the tall, quick-moving young fellow came over to the door and shook his hand with energy. The judge reflected that nobody but Hollister could so convey the effect that he was being made kindly welcome in his own house; but the older man did not dislike this vigor of personality. He sat down on the chair which his young guest indicated as a suitable one, rubbed his chin, and smiled at his daughter.

Lydia said nothing; but her aspect, always vividly expressive of her mood, struck her father as odd. As he glanced at her from time to time during the spirited narrative of the young captain in the army of electricity, Lydia's father felt a qualm of uneasiness. Her lips were very red and a little open, as though she were breathless from some exertion, and a deep flush stained her cheeks. She looked intently at Paul as long as he talked to her father; but when he addressed himself to her, she looked down or away, meeting her father's eyes repeatedly with a curious effect of not seeing him at all. The judge, moved by the oblique, harassing intimations he had been forced to receive from the doctor, as to the possibility of his not understanding all that was in his daughter's mind, was oppressed by that most nightmarish of emotions for a man of clear-cut intellectual interests—an apprehension like an imperceptible, clinging cobweb, not to be brushed away. He wished heartily that his responsibilities in the matter were over, the next year passed, and Lydia "safely married."

"I should have been back ten days ago," Paul drew to the end of his story, "but I simply had to wait to oversee those tests myself. Since I've adopted that rule of personally checking the inspector's work, we've been able to report to the general office forty per cent. fewer complaints of newly installed dynamos. And you see in this case, from the accident, what might have happened."

"By the Lord!" cried the lawyer, stirred, in spite of his preoccupation, by the story of danger the other had been relating, "I should think it would turn your hair white every time a dynamo's installed. How did you feel when the fly-wheel broke?

"The fly-wheel isn't on the dynamo, of course," corrected Paul, "so I don't feel responsible for it in a business way, and that's everything. As for being frightened, why, it's all over so quickly you don't have time to take in what's happening. You're there or you're not. And if you are, the best thing to do is to get busy with repairs." He added, with a simple, manly deprecation of his courage: "You must not think it often happens, you know. It's supposed *never* to!"

He spoke of the personal side of the matter with a dry brevity that contrasted effectively with the unconscious eloquence with which he had previously brought before their eyes the tense excitement in the new power-house when the wheels first stir to life in incredibly rapid revolutions and the mysterious, terrible modern genie begins to rush through the wires. At no time did Lydia's suitor show to better advantage than in speaking of his profession. The alertness of his face and the prompt decision of his speech suited the subject. His mouth fell into lines of grimly fixed purpose which expressed even more than his words when he spoke of the rivalry in endurance, patience, and daring in the army of young electrical engineers, all set, as he was, on crowding one another out of the rapidly

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narrowing road to preferment and the few great golden prizes of the profession.

This evening he was more than usually fervent. Judge Emery thought he detected in him traces of the same excitement which flamed from Lydia's cheeks. "I tell you, judge, it's simply a question of who's got the most to give to his work. He gets the most back from the company, and that's all there is to it. The company's bound to have the man it can get the most work out of, and it'll pay him the most, every time. Why, our field organizer on the Pacific coast is only a little older than I, and by Jove! the work they say he'll turn off is something marvelous! And so's his salary! You can train yourself to work that way just as you can train yourself to anything else. To concentrate, not to lose a detail, to put every ounce of your force into it—that's the thing!"

He brought one hand down inside the other and sat for a moment in a silence as tense with stirring possibilities to the others as to himself. The judge felt moved to a most unusual sensation, as if he were a loosened bowstring beside this twanging, taut intensity. He felt a slight dismay to have his unspoken principles carried to this *n*th power. He had given the best of himself, yes, all his thoughts, illusions, hopes, endeavors, to his own ideal of success. But his ambition had never been concentrated enough on his own personality to serve as a lens through which the rays of his efforts might focus themselves into the single beam of devastating heat on which Paul counted so certainly to burn away the obstacles between himself and success. Various protesting remarks rose to his lips, but he kept them back, disconcerted to find how much they resembled certain comments of Doctor Melton's.

The young man, stirred, looked at Lydia, and smiled brilliantly. "I mustn't keep this little sick-nurse up any later, I suppose," he said, but for a moment he made no movement to go. He and Lydia exchanged a gaze as long and silent as though they had been alone. It occurred to the judge that they both looked dazzled.

When Paul rose, he drew a long breath, and shook his head humorously at his host. "You and I will have to look to our guns the next season to hold our own, won't we? I've been making Lydia promise to reserve me three dances at every single ball this winter."

Lydia said, with her pretty light laugh, a little shaking now: "But suppose you are out of town, setting up some new dynamos, or something?"

Paul crossed the room to her, as if drawn irresistibly by the sound of her voice. He stood by her, looking down into her eyes, bending over her, smiling, confident, pressing, masterful. "You're just to sit out those three dances then, and remember me every minute!"

Lydia's air of attempted archness dropped under this point-blank rejoinder. She flushed painfully and rose, looking at her father. That unimaginative person started toward her as though she had called to him for help, and then, ashamed of his inexplicable nervous impulse, turned away confusedly, and disappeared into the hall.

Paul went on, to Lydia, pointing across to a tall mirror in which they were reflected side by side, "Look, Lydia, look!"

For a moment both the beautiful young creatures looked each into his own eyes, mysterious with youth's total ignorance of its own meaning. Paul took Lydia's hand in his and drew her closer. He tried to speak, but for once his ready tongue was silent.

Judge Emery came back to the door, a weary patience on his white, tired face. The young man turned away with a smile and a sigh. "Yes, yes, judge, I'm off. Good night, Lydia. Don't forget the theatre next Wednesday night."

He crossed the room with a rapid, even step, shook hands with the judge, and got himself out of the room with an easy briskness which the older man, mindful of his own rustic youth, was half inclined to envy.

After he and Lydia were alone the judge did not venture a word of comment lest he hit on the wrong thing. He went silently about, putting out the light and locking the window. Lydia stood motionless where Paul had left her, looking at her bright image in the mirror. When the last bulb went out, the room was in twilight, the street arc-light flickering uncertainly into the windows. Judge Emery stood waiting for his daughter to move. He could scarcely see her form, her face not at all; but there flashed suddenly upon him the memory of her appealing look toward him earlier. It shook him now as it had then. His heart yearned over her. He would have given anything he possessed for the habit of intimate talk with her. He put out his

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hands, but in the twilight she did not see the gesture. He felt shy, abashed, horribly ill at ease, torn by his tenderness, by his sense of remoteness. He said uncertainly, "Lydia—Lydia dear——"

She started. "Oh, yes, of course. It's late." She passed, brushed lightly by him as he stood, trembling with the sense of her dearness to him. She began to ascend the stairs.

He had felt from her the emanation of excitement, guessed that she was shivering, like himself, before a crisis, and he could find no word to say. She had passed him as though he were a part of the furniture. He had never talked to her about—about *things*. He stood at the foot of the stairs in the darkness, listening to her light mounting footfall. Once he opened his mouth to call after her, but the habit of a lifetime closed it.

"She will talk to her mother," he told himself. "Her mother will know what to say."

When he followed her up the stairs he was conscious chiefly that he was immeasurably tired. Melton had perhaps something on his side with his everlasting warnings about nervous breakdowns. He certainly could not stand long strains as he used to. He fell asleep tracing out the thread of the argument presented that day by the counsel for the defense.

CHAPTER IX.

CASUS BELLI

Dr. Melton looked up in some surprise from his circle of lamplight as his goddaughter came swiftly into the room. "Your mother worse?" he queried sharply.

"No, oh, no! I just thought I'd come over and see you for a while. Flora Burgess is with mother, talking over what to put in the paper in Flora's society notes about——"

"You've said enough. I'm thankful you have this refuge to fly to."

"Oh, Flora's not so bad as you make out—the queer little old dowdy thing—only I didn't feel just like talking parties and 'who's who' with her to-night. She does take Endbury society so hard. But her being with mother made it all right for me to leave, don't you see?"

The doctor took off his eye-shade and showed his little wizened face rather paler than usual. "Flora Burgess would kill *me* in an evening if I were in the best of health to begin with, and your mother's not well yet. Still, many folks, many tastes!" He looked at Lydia penetratingly. "Well, my dear, and how does Endbury strike you by this time? Speaking of tastes, what are yours going to be like, I wonder."

"I wonder," she repeated absently.

"Well, at least, you know whether the young man who called on you last night is to your taste."

Lydia turned away with a nervous gesture. "Oh, don't, godfather!"

"Very well, I won't," he said cheerfully, turning to his book with the instinct of a man who knows his womankind.

There was a silence, during which Lydia wandered aimlessly about the room. Then she gave a laugh and went to sit on the arm of his chair. "Of course that was what I came to see you about," she admitted, her sensitive lips quivering into a smile that was not light-hearted; "but now I'm here, I find I haven't anything to say. You'd better give me a pink pill and send me home to forget all about everything."

Dr. Melton took her fingers and held them closely in his thin, sinewy hands. "Oh, if I could—if I only could do something for you!" he searched her face anxiously. "Tell me what young Hollister said that troubles you so."

She reflected. "It was nothing he *said!* He was all right, I guess. Father had scared the life out of me before he came, by sort of taking it for granted—oh, you know, the silly way people do——"

"Yes."

"Well, Paul was as nice as could be about that, as far as words go—he didn't say a thing embarrassing or hard to answer; but he let me *see* all the same! He kept saying what an immense help I'd be to an ambitious man. He said he didn't see why I could not grow into the leader of Endbury society, like the Mrs. Hollister—the one he and his sister live with, you know."

"I suppose he's right," admitted the doctor, reluctantly.

"Well, while he was talking about it, it seemed all very well. You know the way he goes at things—how he makes you feel as though he were a locomotive going sixty miles an hour and you were in the engine-cab holding on for dear life?"

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Dr. Melton shook his head. "Paul has given me a great variety of sensations, but I can't say he ever gave me quite this locomotive-cab illusion you speak of."

"Well, he has me, lots of times," persisted Lydia. "It's awfully exciting. You don't know where you're going, and you can't stop to think, everything tears past you so, and your breath is so blown out of you. You feel like screaming, you get so nervous, and you forget all about everything else—you're so stirred up. But after it's over there's always a sort of time when things are flat. And this morning and all day, I've felt—oh, *different* about the way he talked and what he wanted—queer! I don't believe I'm very well, or maybe—" she broke off to say with emotion: "Oh, godfather, wouldn't it be too awful if I shouldn't have proper ambition!" She pronounced the word with the reverence for its meaning which had been drilled into her all her life, and looked at Dr. Melton with troubled eyes.

He thrust out his lips with a grimace habitual to him in moments of emotion, and for an instant said nothing. When he spoke, his voice broke on her name: "Oh, Lydia, oh, my dear, I'm terribly afraid of your future!"

"I'm a little scared of it myself," she said tremulously, and hid her head on his shoulder.

She was the first to speak. "Wouldn't Marietta just scream with laughter at us?" she reminded him. "We *are* foolish, too! There's nothing in the world you could lay your finger on. There's nothing, anyhow, I guess, but nerves. I wouldn't dare breathe it to anybody else. It's as though —why, here I am grown up and there's nothing for me to do that's worth while even if—even if—Paul——"

The doctor took a sudden resolution. "Why don't you talk to your father, Lydia? Why don't you ask him about——"

Lydia's gesture of utter wonder cut him short. "*Father!* Don't you know there's a big trial on? He couldn't tell without figuring up, if you should ask him quick, whether I am fourteen or nineteen—or nine! Mother wouldn't let me, anyhow, even if he could have any idea of what I'm driving at. She never lets us bother him the least bit when there is something big happening in his lawyering. I remember that time when I had pneumonia and nearly died, when I was a little girl, she told him I had just a little cold—and he never knew any different for years afterward, when I happened to say something about it. She didn't want him worried when he needed all his wits for some important business."

The doctor seemed on the point of some forcible utterance, which he restrained with many twitchings of his mouth. Finally he got up and went to a window, staring out silently.

"I think I'll go and look up dear Aunt Julia," said Lydia.

"Very well, my dear," said the doctor, over his shoulder. "She's in her room, I think." In exactly the same mild tone, he added, "Damnation!"

"What did you say?" asked Lydia.

He turned toward her and took up a book from the table; "I said nothing, dear Lydia. I have nothing to say, I find."

Lydia broke into a light, mocking laugh —the doctor's volubility was an old joke— and was beginning some remark when a woman's voice called: "Oh, Marius, here is Mr. Rankin come in to—why, Lydia, how did you get in without my seeing you?"

She entered the room as she spoke, a middle-aged woman with large blue eyes and graying fair hair, who evidently did her duty by the prevailing fashion in dress with a comfortable moderation of effort.

Lydia rushed at her aunt, exclaiming: "Oh, Aunt Julia, how *good* you do look to me! The office door was open and I slipped in that way without ringing the bell."

"It's four years old and never been *touched*, not even the sleeves," said the other deprecatingly.

Her brother laughed. "Who did you say was here, Julia? Oh, it's you, Rankin! Come in!"

The newcomer was half-way across the room before he saw Lydia. He stopped short with a look of extreme pleasure and surprise which Lydia answered with as frank a smile.

"Oh—why—have you met my niece?" asked Mrs. Sandworth.

"Oh, yes," Lydia said, "Mr. Rankin's my oldest new friend in Endbury. I met him the first day I was back."

"And when I set up a newel-post in the——"

"And I ran on to his house by accident the day Marietta and I were out in the woods——"

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"And borrowed my umbrella and raincoat so I had to call for them——"

"And oh, lots and lots of accidental times. It's been too queer!"

They intoned their confessions like a gay antiphonal chant. A bright color had come up in Lydia's cheeks. She looked very sunny and good-humored, like a cheerful child, an expression which up to that year had been habitual to her. Dr. Melton looked at her without speaking.

"But I mustn't stop, I suppose," the man went on, hesitating. "Miss Emery has precedence."

"Oh, don't mind me!" said Lydia.

"They won't—or anything else, if they once get to discussing things!" her aunt assured her, with a hearty accent of certainty.

Rankin laughed. The doctor did not seem to hear. He was brooding and drumming on the table. From this reverie he was startled by the younger man's next statement.

"I've got an apprentice," he announced.

"Eh?" queried the doctor, with unexpected sharpness.

"The fifteen-year-old son of my neighbor Luigi Varfarone, who works on the railway. The boy's been bad—truant, street-gamin—all that sort of thing; and his mother, who comes in to clean for me sometimes, has been awfully anxious about him. And he's been so interested he's forgotten his deviltry. So yesterday didn't he and his father and his mother and about a dozen little brothers and sisters all come in solemn procession, dressed in their best, to dedicate him to me and my profession, as they grandly call it!"

"Oh, how perfectly lovely!" cried Lydia.

The doctor resumed his drumming morosely. "Of course you know the end of that."

"You mean he'll get tired of it and take to robbing chicken-roosts again?"

"Not much! He'll like it and stick, and bring others, and you'll extend operations and build shops and in no time you'll go the way of all the world—a big factory running night and day; you on the keen jump every minute; dust an inch thick over your music and books; nerves taut; head humming with business schemes to beat your competitors; forget your wife most of the time except to give her money; making profits hand over fist, suborning legislators to wink at your getting special railroad rates for your stuff; can't remember how many children you have; grand success, notable example of what can be done by attention to business; nervous prostration at forty-five, Bright's disease at fifty; leave a million."

Rankin burst into a great roar of boyish laughter at this prophetic flight, but, seeing the doctor continue to frown darkly at him, he said seriously: "Well, I'm no handicraft faddist, you know. I don't see anything wicked in making a lot of chairs by machinery instead of making a few by hand. Maybe it *would* be a good thing to gather the young people of the neighborhood about me——"

"You're lost!" cried the doctor.

"I'm no such a thing!" answered Rankin, still half-laughing at his old friend's tragedy manner. "My business would be for me and my employees, not I and my employees for the business, you can just bet on that!"

The doctor grunted. "Would it? You couldn't compete with your rivals that way. Don't you know that all of a business man's life and energy and thought has got to go into his business to win out?"

"Oh, well, if I couldn't do business there'd be an end of the matter, and none of your horrible prophecies would come true."

"Your wife wouldn't let you." Dr. Melton took up another line of attack. "She'd want a motor car and 'nice' associates and a 'nice' school for the children and a home in the 'respectable' part of town."

Rankin's easy-going manner changed. He sat up and frowned. "There you step on one of my corns, doctor—" he did not apologize for the rustic metaphor. "I don't believe a solitary, identical word of that. It's my most hotly held conviction that women are so much like humans that you can't tell the difference with a microscope. I mean, if it's true that they are interested in petty, material, personal things, it's simply because they're not given a chance at the big, impersonal ones."

"Maybe if you'd practised as long in as many American families as I have, you might have a less idealistic view of your female compatriots," said the doctor sardonically.

"I don't idealize 'em!" cried Rankin. "Good Lord! Don't I say they are just like men? They amount to something if they're

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given something worth while to do, not otherwise."

"Don't you call bringing up children worth while?"

"You bet I do! So much so that I'd have the fathers take their full half of it! I'd have men do more inside the house and less outside, and the women the other way round."

The doctor recoiled at this! "Oh, visionary! It couldn't be done!"

"It couldn't be done in a minute," admitted Rankin.

"But as society's organized, your idea is preposterous!"

"Society's been organized a whole lot of different ways in its time. Who tells me that it's bound to stay this way? I tell you right now, it hasn't got *me* bluffed, anyhow! My wife—if I ever have one—is going to be my sure-enough wife, and my children *my* children as well as my wife's!"

Lydia had turned away in answer to a call from her aunt, and the doctor burst out in a low tone, with a change of manner: "But I'm sick with the slowness of the progress you talk of—believe in. It comes too late—the advance from our tragic materialism; too late for so many who could have profited by it the most——"

He looked toward Lydia, bending over her aunt's fancy work. Rankin followed the direction of his eyes.

"Yes, that's what I mean," said the doctor heavily, rising. "That and such thousands of others. Oh, for a Theseus to hunt down this Minotaur of false standards and base conceptions of success! I see them, the precious youths and maidens going in by thousands to his den of mean aspirations—and not a hand is raised to warn them. They must be silly and tragic and lose their lives, because every one else is like that! Poor Hollister himself is far inside the labyrinth."

Rankin shook his head. "Well, I think I'm proving that you don't *have* to go into the labyrinth—that a person can live in health and happiness outside."

"There's rather more than that to be done, you'll admit!" said the doctor, with an uncompromising bitterness.

Rankin colored. "I don't pretend that it's much of anything—what I've done."

The doctor did not deny him. He thrust out his lips and rubbed his hand nervously over his face. Finally, "but you have done it, at least," he brought out, "and I've only talked. As another doctor said, 'I have never taken a bribe, but there is a pale shade of bribery known as prosperity.'"

They fell into silence, broken by Mrs. Sandworth's asking: "Lydia, have your folks got an old mythology-book? I studied it at school, of course, but it has sort of passed out of my mind. Was it the Minotaur that sowed teeth, and something else very odd came up that you wouldn't expect?"

Lydia did not smile. "I don't know whether we have the book or not, but Miss Salter told us about the story of the Minotaur. There's a picture of Theseus and Ariadne in Europe somewhere—Munich, I think, or maybe Siena. It was where one of the girls got a sore throat and we had to stay quite a while, I remember. Miss Salter told us the story then."

The doctor stood up: "I'm off to an engagement," he said. "Rankin, see that Lydia gets home safely, will you?"

He nodded them a short, absent farewell and disappeared.

As the two young people set off in a rapid, swinging walk in the cold night air—"Whatever could have set him off so?" wondered Rankin casually.

"I'm afraid I did," Lydia surmised. "I had a wretched fit of the blues and I guess he must have caught them from me."

Rankin looked down at her keenly, his thoughts apparently quite altered by her phrase. "Ah, yes, he worries a great deal about you," he murmured.

Lydia laughed nervously and said nothing. They walked swiftly in silence. The stars were thick above them in the wind-swept autumn night. Lydia tilted her head to look up at them once or twice. She saw Rankin's face pale under the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat, his eyes meeting hers in an intent regard, like a wordless speech. The fine, cold, austere wind swept them along like leaves, whipping their young pulses, chanting loudly in the leafless branches of the maples, and filling the dark spaces above them with a great, humming roar. They thrilled responsive to all this and to the mood of high seriousness each divined in the other.

Lydia's voice breaking in upon their intimate silence continued the talk, but it was with another note. The mute interval, filled with wind and darkness and the light

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of stars, had swung them up to a higher plane. She spoke with an artless sureness of his comprehension—a certainty. They were close in spirit at that moment, and she was not frightened, not even conscious of it. "Why should the doctor worry? *What is the matter?* Marietta says the trouble with me is that I'm spoiled with having everything I want."

"Have you everything you want?" Rankin's bluntness of interrogation was unmitigated.

Lydia looked up at him swiftly, keenly. In his grave face there was that which made her break out with an open, quivering emotion she had not shown even to the doctor's loving heart. "It's a weight on my very soul—that there's nothing for me to look forward to—nothing—nothing that's worth growing up to do. I haven't been taught anything, but I know enough to know I want to be something better than—perhaps I can't be, but I want to try! I want to try! That's not much to ask—just a chance to try! But I don't know how to do it. I don't even dare speak of—of such things. People laugh and say its Sunday-schooly fancies, that'll disappear—that I'll forget when I get into living. But I don't want to forget! I'm afraid I shall. I want to keep trying. I don't know——"

They did not slacken their swift advance as they talked. They looked at each other earnestly in the starlight.

Rankin gave an indrawn exclamation as she finished, and after an instant's pause he said with deep emotion: "Oh, perhaps—at least, we both want to try—*be Ariadne for me!* Help me to find the clue to what's wrong in our lives, and perhaps—" He looked down at her, shaken, drawing quick breaths. She answered his gaze silently, her face as shining white as his.

He went on: "You shall decide what Ariadne may be, or may come to be—I will take whatever you choose to give—and bless you——!"

She made a gesture of humility: "*I* haven't anything to give!"

His accent was memorable as he cried: "You have yourself—you—you wonderful—but you are too gentle! It is hard for you to do what you feel should be done. I could perhaps do the things if you would tell me—help you not to forget, I mean, not to let life make you forget what's worth doing and having——"

She put back a mesh of her windblown hair to look at him intently and to say again in wonder: "I'm not anything. What can you think I—what can you hope——"

They were standing now on the walk before her father's house. "I can hope—" his voice shook—"I can hope that you may make me into a man worthy to help you be the best that's in you."

Lydia put out her hand impulsively. It did not tremble. She looked at him with radiant, steady eyes. He raised the slim, gloved fingers to his lips—"Whether to leave you or to try to—oh, I would give my life to know how best to serve you!" he said huskily. He turned away, the sound of his steps ringing loud in the silent street.

Lydia went slowly up the walk and into the empty hall. There she stood an instant, her hands clasped before her breast, her eyes closed, her face still and clear. Then she moved up-stairs like one in a dream.

As she passed her mother's door she started violently. Some one had called her name laughingly. "Oh, come in, come in!" called Marietta mockingly. "We know all about everything. We heard you come up the street and saw you philandering on the front walk. And for all it's so dark, we could make out that Paul kissed your hand when he went away."

There was a silence in the hall. Then Lydia appeared in the door. Mrs. Emery gave a scream—"Why, Lydia, what makes you look so queer?"

They turned startled, inquiring, daunting eyes upon her. It was the baptism of fire to Lydia. The battle, inevitable for her, had begun. She faced it; she did not take refuge in the safe, silent lie which opened before her; but her courage was a piteous one. In her utter, heart-sick shrinking from the consequences of her answer, she had a premonition of the weakness which was to make the combat so unequal.

"It was not Paul," she said, pale in the doorway. "It was Daniel Rankin."

The next instalment of **"The Squirrel Cage"** *will appear in the December number.*

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A DEAD GAME SPORT

by
LEAVITT
ASHLEY
KNIGHT

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY HOWARD GILES

IF MR. BARTON FERRY had not graduated from Yale into the ribbon business; if, in this transition, he had not become walking delegate for the Bruisers' Union (*alias* the football squad); if he hadn't dropped off at Glenhaven on Firemen's Day; and if, at this epoch, Beef Wardell hadn't been doling out socks to the sockless over his daddy's counter in Wardell's Emporium, the world might not know what a Dead Game Sport is.

Most of those bearing this high name are four-flushers, pikers, touts, tin-horns, pugs, rah-rah boys, or hall-roomers. The thoroughbred Dead Game Sport is brother to the Great Auk; he's a bird, and as rare. The only persons who have positively seen him are the few who, some years ago, mixed in certain events ensuing after Mr. Barton Ferry, Yale '94, dropped his sample cases at the door of Wardell's Emporium as Beef was locking up one hot July morning.

"Come around to-morrow," the clerk advised Mr. Ferry. "This is Firemen's Day. I've got to drive our delivery wagon in the parade, and afterward I'm end man for the Knights of Pythias team in the tug-of-war against the Spanish-American Vets. Then I've some other stunts—hundred-yard dash, quarter-mile, and a lot of others. Ever see them?"

Mr. Ferry smiled thinly. Had he ever seen them! After eight years on the road from Quonacontaug, Rhode Island, to Spavin Bend, Texas! He, Yale '94, whose chief side line was discovering likely athletes for Alma Mater!

"Lead me to it!" he begged, optically measuring Beef. "There'll be something doing! You weigh 225, don't you?"

"Plus two and an ounce," Beef grinned, as Mr. Ferry's admiring finger-tips scurried up and down the giant's biceps.

There was something doing. Back of Smead's Burlap Mill, Mr. Ferry hysterically watched the counter-partner of Wardell's Emporium take the K. of P. end of the tug-of-war rope and lie down on his job, blinking amiably at the helpless Heroes of Tampa on the other end. Wishing to give Glenhaven a run for its money, Beef hung on passively for five minutes, while the community shrieked in suspense over the close contest. Then a K. of P. lost his wind and his grip; he bowled against

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his rear neighbor, who followed suit politely. Beef saw the disaster before it happened. Instantly his legs stiffened, he tilted ever so little, and the handkerchief on the middle of the rope moved two feet over the fatal line, dragging behind it the Heroes of Tampa.

Mr. Ferry's stop-watch checked off ten and four-fifths seconds against Beef in the hundred-yard dash; but, as one of his competitors stumbled at the start, Beef insisted that the race be run over, which it was, with Beef again winning, this time in eleven flat. Later, the big clerk rubbed into the sod the unwilling shoulders of two blacksmiths, a butcher, and three mill hands, in the heavy-weight wrestling match. A dozen times Mr. Ferry yelled, "Foul!" at the mill-hands, who loved the stranglehold.

"Never mind them!" Beef soothed him afterward. "I'd protest, if they knew the rules of the mat; but they don't. It's a game of grab; and, as I knew it beforehand, I can't kick. But gosh! My neck's sore!"

"You are a Dead Game Sport, my boy!" Yale '94 thumped Beef's broad back. "You need a higher education! High-school graduate, ain't you? And you'd like a trip through college, eh? Well, give me a sixty-day option on your future, and I'll put you next to a high-grade sheepskin, all wool and a yard wide. I'll raise a scholarship for you if I have to mortgage the campus."

And Mr. Ferry did. In early September, George Wardell was being investigated and examined by a committee at the home of its chairman, Mr. Notte, in Slumber Sands, Long Island. The committeemen did not seem at all like the college professors whose pictures Beef had seen in *Puck* and *Life*. Neither was Slumber Sands an academic solitude: it consisted of a thirty-room "cottage" in the midst of forty acres of golf links, tennis-courts, polo ponies, bathing beaches, champagne bottles, and week-enders. The week-enders averaged about 170 pounds apiece (of which 169 pounds and 15 ounces lay below the cerebellum). Mr. Notte inspected samples of Beef's handwriting, asked him to spell "apogee," and "syzygy"; invited him to divide 125 by 3-5, and to name five wars in which the United States had participated. At Beef's confession that he was loaded for an examination in trigonometry and Cicero, Mr. Notte referred him to the Yale committee on entrance conditions.

"We are here considering only your fitness to receive a scholarship," the chairman concluded. "Character and personality alone interest us. We leave to the college authorities the matter of deciding whether you are well informed——"

"Then you are not the college authorities?" Beef's astonishment disconcerted the committee. "Mr. Ferry said——"

"We are prominent alumni, Mr. Wardell, who are fond of helping worthy young men secure higher education."

"Philanthropists, you know!" added Mr. Blackmar, Yale '97, junior partner of Notte & Company, brokers, Wall Street. "We assist the university by giving private scholarships——"

"How very good of you!" Beef spoke out his admiration.

"Oh, no!" Mr. Blackmar waved modestly. "We are simply jealous of our Alma Mater's good name. We strive to keep professional athletes off her teams—fellows, you know, who take pay to come to college and play football or something else. They hurt the place and us alumni very much. We offer scholarships to honest, clean sports who buck the line just for the fun of it, and who wouldn't take money. That's your kind, isn't it?"

"That's my ticket!" Beef looked the broker proudly in the eye.

"You'll do, then, I guess," Mr. Blackmar replied; and the other committeemen formally agreed after they had watched Beef swim, box, and run. "Wow! He's the best thing in ten years!" one of them whispered, within Beef's hearing. "Three seasons of him, and we can pull out of the Street!"

Thus it came about that George Wardell, of Glenhaven's Emporium, went to Yale. And, once there, he straightway became famous as the Dead Game Sport. As the rules forbade freshmen to play on the 'Varsity, Beef opened his academic career as King of the Scrubs. Yale had seen many a master of gridiron tactics as ingenious as Beef; but never his equal as an idolatrous, passionate preacher and practitioner of fair play. He thumped his own worshipful Scrubs for off-side plays, and he compelled a 'Varsity veteran to quit the team after persistent slugging in a scrimmage. He made Yale lose a game to Brown by calling the umpire's attention to two habitual rule-breakers in the Blue line. Some under-

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"SHE'D BE AN AWFULLY NICE GIRL, IF SHE WERE ONLY NICE," SAID BEEF, MEANING TO DEFEND HER.

graduates who lost heavily on that game cried "Treason!"—but Beef received a basket of letters from powerful alumni telling him to keep up the good work. And he was marked as the mainstay of the next year's team.

Not even the craftiest veteran coach, though, suspected how far Beef carried fair play. Only the Yale faculty knew that he was living up to the rules of the classroom game quite as faithfully as to the gridiron by-laws. At the close of the first term of Beef's freshman year, his dazed professors met and tried to comprehend the miracle of a very large body occupying two different places at one and the same time: how could 227 pounds of football flesh be on the Eleven and also in the Upper Ten of the high-brow world? Yet Beef had accomplished the impossibility; for lo! he stood at the head of his class.

Beef was immensely pleased by his teachers' praise, and he made a note of it—modestly—in the monthly report which, according to the rules of his scholarship committee, he submitted to Mr. Notte. The broker was also immensely pleased. He invited Beef down to New York and lionized him a whole week, in company with some of the 170-pounders whom the freshman had met at Slumber Sands the summer before. The 170-pounders had apparently not heard of Beef's intellectual prowess, and Beef was not inclined to enlighten them. They discussed minutely the left guard's wind, the full-back's torn tendon, next year's candidates for quarter-back, rumors about Harvard's new-found giant half-back, and the lightning "end" whom Princeton had found out in Wisconsin. Beef was amazed at their knowledge of every quirk, wrinkle, dodge, and mystery of the pigskin game. They would have given him much pleasure, had not Miss Cecilia Notte spilled wormwood in the cup of joy they poured for him.

When her father introduced the future right guard of Eli to her, the young lady nodded a hundred-millionth of a millimeter and remarked: "Oh, another of your gladiators?" And then, finding him dumb before the audible contempt in her voice: "How do *you* like the football *business?*"

He made some kind of noise with his mouth.

"It's quite a sweatshop they run up at New Haven, isn't it? I must visit it some day."

"Why!" he exclaimed, wide-eyed, "I

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didn't know there were any factories or slums up there! The sociology class always comes down to New York after raw material——"

"But not after the finished product!" she commented sarcastically. "New York's pretty crude, but if anybody wants to see child labor with a high polish, let him go to your training quarters. There are plenty of overworked and underpaid infants there!"

At last he comprehended; but, as he complimented her wit, she eyed him irritably and swept off to another gladiator, whom in turn she soon stung and deserted. Mr. Notte, observing her manners, unwillingly confided to Beef: "She has a chronic grouch against us sports. Always talks at us in italics—just notice! The darned little hussy! I wish some saphead would marry her and take her to Honduras or Beloochistan! But they're all wise! She's too poor a sport for even a mollycoddle."

"She'd be an awfully nice girl, if she were only nice," said Beef, meaning to defend her. Of course, that reached her ears, heightening her color and lowering her esteem of him.

A fortnight later something big and mysterious was happening on the Yale crew. Some people said that all the new candidates had failed miserably, while others whispered that every man in last year's boat had been elbowed out. But these were only guesses. As a sophomore remarked, the trainer had passed on a straight tip to nobody but God, President Hadley, and Beef. And this was evidently Mr. Notte's opinion, for he hastily summoned his protégé, "to talk over the situation, for old Eli's sake."

Beef was awaiting the great philanthropist in his library, when in popped Miss Cecilia.

"Oh!" she said, as though to a hired man. "*You* here again?" And, without a second glance at the embarrassed youth, she set to rummaging through a table drawer.

"I've come on business," Beef said, with vast dignity, resolved that she shouldn't imagine he was paying her a social visit.

"Of course!" The girl laughed contemptuously. "You're going to tell papa about the shake-up on the crew. What else could bring you here?"

"Why!" Beef gasped foolishly. The smash through center caught him off his guard. "If—you weren't so—mean to me, you might—You're awfully nice——"

"You impudent——!" A rush of anger choked her. "Will you kindly learn your place in our establishment as quickly as possible? I don't receive tradesmen in the parlor!"

When Beef emerged from his daze, she was gone. He admitted to himself that he had been mistaken; she wasn't nice at all; she was—well, say a snob. "I'm a dry-goods clerk, and she's an heiress," he mused. "But what of it? She ought not to hit a fellow like that, when he's down in the ranks. Poor Mr. Notte! How it must hurt a fine sportsman to have such a daughter! I wish she were only—oh! what's the use of dreaming? She won't play the game with me, and I'll not try to make her. I shouldn't like to have anybody make me!"

So, that very evening, he called himself "Yours obediently," and "Your humble servant" in her presence, and addressed her as "Ma'am." For an instant, she looked up sharply and colored, then quickly framed her remarks to him in that superior familiarity with which a mistress orders about her household servants.

This kept up until the end of Beef's sophomore year. Then certain unsuspected sides of a Dead Game Sport appeared and revised everybody's manners.

Mr. Notte took the right guard into his office for the summer vacation and started to teach him what the broker termed "the big football game of Life." Beef set about selling stocks and bonds to "conservative investors." Mr. Notte fixed up a handsomely conservative business card for him and mailed one to everybody Beef had ever known. Pretty soon, old man Smead, he of the Burlap Mill back in Glenhaven, came around to invest ten thousand dollars in bonds that would net him four and a half per cent. without loss of sleep. Mr. Notte handed Beef a prospectus of the Rock River Power Company 5's, 1941, saying: "Talk that to the geezer. Now, let's see how smooth you are!"

The geezer scrutinized every comma in the prospectus. "It *looks* purty good, Beef," he concluded. "But, gosh! Eighty-five is too cheap fer gilt-edged fives. Howsomever, I'll put it up to you! I ain't wise on these water-power affairs; maybe they are a bonanza. As I say, I'll put it up to you. You're on the level, and you know this here Wall Street game. Jest tell me

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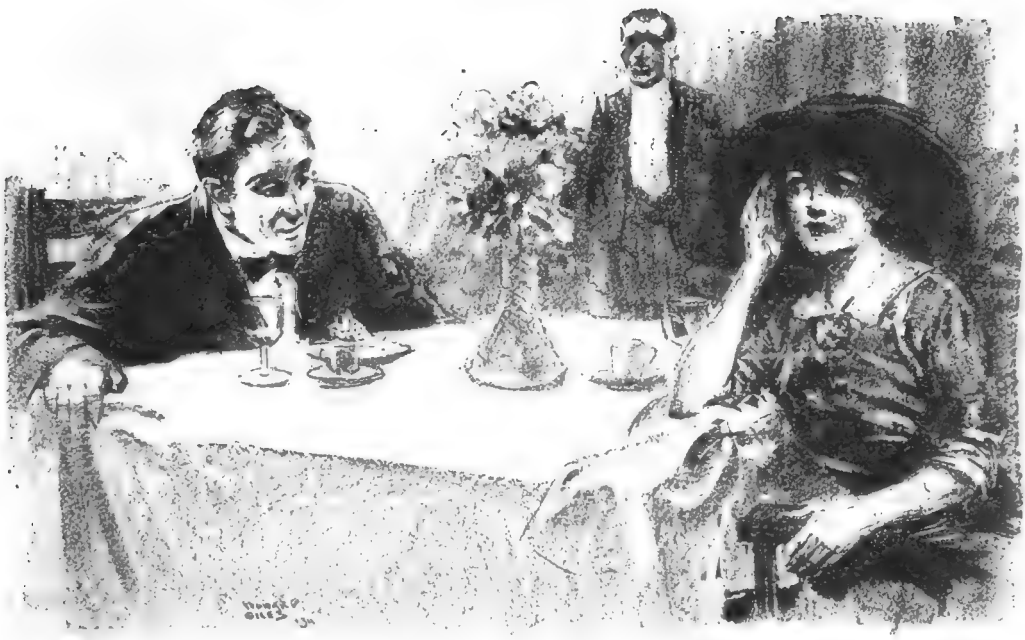

"HM! SAY, MISS CECILIA——"
"CECILIA," SHE CORRECTED HIM AGAIN. "HOW OFTEN MUST I TELL YOU?"

if there's any tin-foil in the gilt-edging."

Beef's pencil ran through the prospectus, his mind in hot pursuit; and, in an hour, he discovered that the Rock River Power Company had issued three million dollars' worth of bonds against mountain land which it had bought for one-tenth that figure. Mr. Notte scowled at Beef's report and said that, anyhow, the property would be worth twice the bond issue after the corporation had put in its plant and the railroad extended a spur thither. Beef asked what might happen, in case the spur didn't; his employer said it couldn't fail, as the railroad itself was heavily interested in the power company. Beef observed that the railroad didn't seem to have a single director on the Rock River board; he also called attention to certain differences between stocks and bonds which tempted Mr. Notte to ejaculate caustically that the young man had been taking too many courses in economics and too much stock in his professors' theories.

Thereupon, very politely, Beef arose and delivered a short, pregnant speech, displaying a familiarity with high finance worthy of a member of Yale's high-brow Upper Ten and winding up with an end play worthy of her most successful Eleven.

"I'm a greenhorn in Wall Street," he ended, returning the Rock River prospectus to Mr. Notte. "But I see enough to know that I'm not going to like the game they play down here. The Rock River people and most others play horse with the rules; they issue bonds as speculative as stocks, and they juggle figures to conceal the trick. Then they ask 'conservative investors' to come have a short round or two with them. By the Lord Harry! That's as dirty as slugging in a scrimmage, isn't it, Mr. Notte?"

"Yes, yes!" the broker hastened to agree. "I'll look into those fellows, Beef. Maybe they are crooks. Show that chap some Pennsylvania fours. And, by the way, my superintendent at Slumber Sands has suddenly left. Won't you take his job for the rest of the summer? A bunch of the boys will be down there all next month to talk over the new football rules; so you'll have to be on hand most of the time, anyhow. Running Slumber Sands isn't hard; there are fifteen servants, all well broken, and Cecilia won't bother you."

"It will be pleasanter than this!" Beef

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accepted the escape. "I don't see how you stand it, Mr. Notte."

Beef packed off that very night to Slumber Sands, which he speedily found not a whit pleasanter than Wall Street. No longer did Miss Cecilia treat him like a humble servant; she hated him openly. Poor Beef was in a perpetual stew, and all the flavor simmered out of him, so that his conversation with her was somewhat less entertaining and spiritual than a football signal, which it resembled in that it marked fresh hostilities. A full week he endured the situation; then Mr. Notte and some friends ran over to Larchmont, leaving Beef to Cecilia's tender mercy.

"Why didn't you go to the yacht races with papa?" she inquired at luncheon, resentfully.

"I don't care for yachts," he excused himself. "I can't sail, and the sport is slow."

"What of it? You could make money betting, even if you don't sail. Papa would give you the right tip."

"But I don't bet." Beef kept guilty eyes on his chop.

"*Wh-a-a-t?*" The girl's brows went up. Quickly, though, she returned to her accustomed scorn. "Oh, drop that game with me, please! Father works it to death. I believe he sometimes thinks he fools me."

"I've never bet a cent on anything in my life!" Beef was no longer confused. "I think putting money on mere chance is about the stupidest pastime on earth, and betting on a sure thing is dirty. Beg pardon! —Your father is all right—no harm meant, really! Only—well, I don't enjoy a wager."

Cecilia's laugh rasped him. "This is very funny! Is it a new fad among professional athletes? It sounds like some of papa's friends who loot stockholders for a living, and then pride themselves upon their kindness to street beggars."

"You are most unjust," Beef spoke low, for he was fighting down his anger. "I'm not posing, and I'm not a professional athlete——"

"In a minute you'll tell me that you went to college at the age of twenty-three for an education," the girl sneered.

"I did," Beef declared stoutly.

"Do you mean to say that you *study?* Maybe you're also brazen enough to tell me you aren't getting five or six thousand a season for football?"

"Miss Cecilia——"

"My name is Notte," she snapped.

"Miss Notte, you ought to know your father better! He wouldn't let me enter this house if I were taking money for playing on an amateur team. Why, if you'd heard him rub it into professionals when his committee awarded me my scholarship——"

"Scholarship?" Wordless amazement relaxed Cecilia's brown, oval face. "Tell me about that!"

He told her the whole story. When he had finished, she was twisting her handkerchief and murmuring: "Oh, I'm so sorry! What a fool I have been! I felt that you weren't of their kind all the time, but I distrusted my instinct—it has been deceived so often in Slumber Sands. How I must have hurt you a thousand times!"

"Oh, no!" Beef clumsily essayed the rôle of Ananias. "You haven't hurt me! You've been very nice——"

"You mean, I would have been nice, if I had only been nice?" She looked eagerly for a sign in his embarrassed face—and found it. While he was struggling with an apology for that ancient rudeness, the door maid brought Miss Cecilia a card, saying: "He says he'll not go until he sees you."

Miss Cecilia left the room. In ten minutes she returned fingering a long, thick envelope.

"Now I know—" her eyes rested happily on his— "why they call you Dead Game Sport! I thought they meant you were the trickiest of the tricky; so when I saw honesty written all over you, I concluded that you were a cleverer hypocrite than papa. Yes! I know what I'm saying! Papa is a great hypocrite—and worse. He started his fortune eighteen years ago by placing heavy bets for a rich crowd on the Harvard-Yale game. Ever since, he has bought and sold inside tips on all the leading sports and teams. But poor papa has been having trouble, of late, keeping on the inside. Twice his gladiator has been placed on the Yale eleven only to be booted out before the big games because he couldn't even bluff through his class work. So you can imagine how dearly Notte & Company love you! The crowd cleaned up twenty thousand dollars in your freshman year, through the confidential information you passed on to them. And from the four big games last fall, papa alone raked in seventy thousand. Pretty good returns from a thousand-dollar scholarship!"

"So that's why you treated me like a

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hired man!" Beef wagged his elephantine head ponderously. "You were quite right, Miss Cecilia—er—excuse me, Miss Notte."

"Miss Cecilia," she corrected him; "but I was not right! I was worse than wrong; I was unfair. I never gave you a chance to defend yourself. I judged you by the company you kept. You see, I am not a Dead Game Sport!"

"Oh, yes, you are!" Beef's attempt at gallantry revealed lack of practise. "I ought to have been despised for being such a hypertrophied, impenetrable j a c k a s s. Seventy thousand dollars cleared off four games! Hm! Say, Miss Cecilia——"

"Cecilia," she corrected him again. "How often must I tell you?"

"I thought you said *Miss*——"

"You are a thick-headed person," she observed critically. "Well, you were going to say——"

"Did your father need that seventy thousand badly?"

"About as badly as you need seventy cents. He is four or five millions ahead of the game. They say he's made nearly a million of it betting; the rest comes from 'conservative investors,' upon whom he unloads steel engravings that look like securities, but that are as insecure as papa's reputation——"

"You speak as though you didn't like your father's business," Beef gave rein to his admiration."

"How I hate it!" Cecilia quivered. "And how I loathe the life he has brought me into! But for the hounding by yellow reporters I'd have run away long ago! Slumber Sands is a social pest-house. The *real* business men down-town know papa; they pass on the still word to their wives; and the mama wives drop clear hints to their sons and daughters. So the house-party lists and the dance programs are very carefully drawn so that Miss Notte doesn't appear. Nice girl? Oh, yes! Rich? Has a fortune from her dear, dead mother, who died of a broken heart, if anybody ever did. Cultured? To be sure—a Vassar graduate. But—something may happen some day in the office of Notte & Company that will make Miss Notte's acquaintances painfully conspicuous. But why bother you with such gossip? A man can not understand what it means to a woman to be cut off from upright men—people."

"Say, let's walk!" Beef burst forth. "I've got to cool off!"

"It's ninety-one in the shade," she smiled.

"I'm away past boiling-point, and going yet! But you can't stand the noon sun; so please excuse me, will you? I want to go far off in a field and listen to myself bray."

"I like the heat. Please let me go along! But first I must get this off for the afternoon mail." She held up the long, thick envelope which she had brought back from her interview with somebody. "These registered bonds are a nuisance! Tell me, do I have to sign them somewhere, in order to have them transferred to me?" She passed the envelope to Beef, who, in utter mystification, read on its upper left-hand corner the familiar business card of Smead's Burlap Mill, Glenhaven. He drew forth ten one-thousand-dollar bonds, Rock River Power Company 5's, 1941, issued to Simeon Smead.

"How did you come by these?"

"Just a little bargain I picked up at a remnant sale," she jested bitterly. "Do I have to sign them?"

"You have bought them from old man Smead?"

"Old man— Do you know him?" Her cheeks turned poppy-red.

Then he told his first and last Wall Street adventure.

"I advised him not to buy them," Beef concluded. "Why the dickens did he? And why did you—? I don't believe they're worth the paper they are printed on!"

"But it's *very* fine paper!"

"You ought not invest your money without consulting a business man—your father or——"

"My father!" Cecilia's soul struck fire on that hard word. "If I had consulted him, he would have had all my four hundred thousand dollars in Rock River Power bonds or something worse, long since!"

"You know, then, that Rock River Power is trash? What in Heaven's name——"

"Papa—mis—misinformed Mr. Smead about the company. Mr. Smead threatened a public scandal when he found out the truth." Cecilia's pretty form drooped like a parched flower. "Papa ignored his letters. Then he came here—that was he in the parlor—and he was going to stay until papa made good. So I—I had some c a p i t a l seeking a conservative investment——"

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THE LARCHMONT PARTY HAD RETURNED, BRINGING A VERY LARGE ROLL AND A SLIGHT LURCH.

"How extensively have you invested in such conservative——?"

"That is my affair. I asked you whether these bonds must be signed."

"Well, Cecilia, that question is my affair too. You and I have been played for suckers or goats or under-dogs or something like them; and I am considering a quick step upward in the animal kingdom. If you want to come up, too, you'd better answer me. It will take nice, snappy team-work to score on that gang of sports which is now cleaning up the visible cash assets at the Larchmont races. But if you'll play with me, we'll buck their line hard and save ourselves from them."

"Team-work sounds good!" Cecilia's gaze was all innocence. "Well, I've invested about forty thousand dollars. But what are you going to do about it?"

"If you'll help me, I may get the money back."

"Oh, count on me!" she cried joyfully. "I'll stick by you to the goal-posts."

"Even if you had to testify against your father."

"That would hurt a little, Beef!"—she smiled to hide her wincing—"but I'm game!"

"I shall see that nothing more comes out than is absolutely necessary. How about Blackmar and the others? Do you know what they have made through me?"

"Haven't they hurrahed over it often in my hearing? Blackmar $35,000, Edmonds $15,000, Herrick $22,000. Meyer—hm, I've forgotten. And that tricky little drummer, Barton Ferry, $2,000. How much they marketed your tips for, I don't know."

When Beef had jotted this down, he thrust the Rock River Power bonds in his pocket and took Cecilia on a long walk, from which his companion returned happier than exercise or the prospect of squaring accounts ever makes people. She left Beef at ten o'clock, when the Larchmont party returned, bringing a very large roll and a slight lurch. Mr. Notte & Company had again cleaned up everything in sight. They waved forty thousand dollars in yellow-backs, more than half of which was the day's kill. Mr. Notte turned on the piazza lights and the champagne. They were drinking a toast to something inarticulate, when Beef passed around four envelopes addressed to Messrs. Notte, Blackmar, Edmonds, and Herrick respectively.

"V'y funny, Beef, m' boy!" cackled his

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THE YOUNG MAN HAD ENTANGLED HIS COAT-SLEEVE BUTTONS IN A BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE'S TRESSES SO BADLY THAT THE CONDUCTOR HAD TO REMOVE THE ORNAMENTS WITH A JACK-KNIFE.

employer. "But wha's th' joke?" He read aloud: "Cr. Mr. Matthew Notte, Slumber Sands, To George Wardell, Dr., To Professional Services rendered (50 per cent. commission on gross profits) $35,000."

"That's my bill for football operations last season. I'm a little short, so I wish you could accommodate me to-night, seeing that you have some loose change in your jeans."

There was something in his easy, jesting manner that sobered the bettors a little.

"Say, who's been stuffing you?" Mr. Notte demanded furiously. "If it's that Cecilia——"

"Nobody has been stuffing me," Beef used his verbs precisely. "I'm pulling out of football for good and must close all accounts. I'm a bit weary of the professional grind!"

"You a profesh!" moaned Meyer, glancing toward Notte. "Why in hell—hic—Notte, did you tell us he was a sucker?"

"Mr. Notte meant I was a bloodsucker!" roared Beef, while the broker receded, cursing Meyer for his tattle. "My charges are scandalous! Fifty per cent. of all you dirty crooks clean up with my assistance. But then, think what a nasty job it is, having to live within smell of you; having to believe your filthy lies about helping worthy students through college——"

Herrick, bubbling with champagne, ripped out an oath and leaped at the insulter with swinging fists. Tenderly Beef caught him by the wrists and halted his two hundred pounds of lumpy muscles. Herrick kicked Beef cruelly, and Beef promptly took him by the throat and wrenched him over the piazza railing into a bed of geraniums.

Had Notte & Company not been imbibing all day, they would have profited by Herrick's example; but alcohol made fools of them. Down they stormed upon Beef in a mass, as bravely as rain-drops beat upon a mountain—and with about the same results. They were seven, when Edmonds, in their van, smote Beef terrifically on the jaw; and then they were six, for Beef's hickory arms flickered like a snake's tongue—and Edmonds's beautiful Roman nose was a Roman ruin, under which its owner lay buried, bleeding, and somewhat more senseless than usual. Two of the sextet simultaneously locked Beef's throat in the stranglehold—for three seconds; and then there were

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four who had not been threshed about like rag dolls.

Insane over the havoc, Mr. Notte smashed at his scholarship man with a chair, which Beef jerked daintily from him and drove convincingly against Mr. Notte's left mastoid bone. This induced the proprietor of Slumber Sands to cease thinking for half an hour. When he came back into the course of human events, he found himself and his brave crew neatly bound and locked in his own library, facing the Glenhaven monster, who was counting stacks of yellowbacks and writing receipts at the table.

"Thank you, gentlemen," Beef was saying, as he handed the receipts to his debtors. "I shall credit your accounts. As to the balance due, if it isn't in my mail within thirty days, Merton & Merton will take up my claim. Georgie Merton, the senior Merton's son, is my chum at Yale. The whole Merton family is bent on driving touts and profesh out of Eli's athletics."

"Pay up!" commanded Mr. Notte, as Herrick swore he would have Beef jailed for robbery. "The fiend can run the whole crowd of us off every gridiron in the East. The alumni know *us*, and the faculty knows *him*. He could squeeze us for all he's brought us——"

"No, I couldn't!" protested Beef. "That would be unprofessional. Quite contrary to the rules of the business game, you know!"

Into his valise Beef packed forty thousand dollars in yellowbacks and checks for thirty-one thousand more. Then he asked Mr. Notte whether he didn't wish to invest in conservative bonds, handing the broker old man Smead's Rock River Power 5's, and all the rest of poor Cecilia's forty-thousand-dollar rubbish. Mr. Notte uttered one long groan; then another slip of signed paper was added to the evening's collection.

"Gentlemen," he bowed to his audience, "I'm mortally afraid of somnambulists; and, as your sleep may be troubled to-night, I'm going to New York on the midnight train. Thank you all kindly for your fair play! Good-by!"

Beef set out briskly for the station. Halfway on the journey, as he passed through a dense cluster of scrub pines, he heard the soft, faint crunching of shoes on the cinder path behind him. He stiffened for another encounter—it might be the stablemen, dispatched by Notte & Company to retrieve its fortunes. He peered through the moonless night, holding his breath. In a minute he perceived that there was only one pursuer; but, instead of plucking up courage, the conqueror of all Notte & Company hurried on, cold with fear, toward the station, whose protecting lights shone a quarter-mile off. The pursuer broke into a run and quickly overtook him.

"What do you want, Miss Notte?" Beef asked roughly.

"I heard it all from my bedroom window," she panted. "We won, didn't we?"

"Yes." Beef eyed her, puzzled. "But——"

"Then I want my share of the winnings!"

"Why, certainly!" Beef flushed, and opened his valise. "I hope you didn't think I wasn't going to——"

"Shut that valise!" the young woman commanded quietly. "I said I wanted my share of the winnings!"

"But it's in there!" Beef protested. "The check for the Rock River bonds——"

"One minute!" Her fingers drove hard against his arm. "We've planned our game together up to the last move. But how about the next one? Where are you going, Beef?"

"I'm going to put this loot in a bank, as fast as ever I can," Beef recited faithfully. "Then I'll send you your check, if you don't want it now——"

"And then——" She halted him in the black shadow of a spruce.

"Then——" He stared foolishly into the blur whence issued the soft music of those two syllables. "Then—why! I hadn't thought so far ahead! But I guess I'll have to get busy hunting up conservative investments—for this wad!" Gleefully he held up the valise against the sky.

"And then——" Cecilia was less musical now.

"Maybe a trip to Europe, before college opens," Beef mused. "But, as I said, I'm not worrying about next week yet—and, hang me, if I see why you should!"

"I'm only worrying about the rules of team-work, Beef!" Cecilia's voice moved as gently as a tigress prowling through cane-brake after wakeful prey. "I'm a greenhorn at it. So you must set me right."

"Are you afraid we've done something improper?" Beef asked anxiously.

"I don't think *we* have—" She *would* speak in italics! "But—well, tell me—" her eyes were on the station lights. "If

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a player does not do his part; if he does not listen to the signals; if he drops out of the game before the team has won——"

"He's bad meat!"

"That's not as pretty a name as Beef!" Cecilia mused. "But if you say so, it fits. Tut! One minute! You coached me for team-work, didn't you? And I promised to play my little part to the finish, didn't I? And what was the finish to have been? What was our game? You said we should play to rid *ourselves* of papa and his crowd. Well, I did my little trick on the team; I gave you the list of winnings, and promised to testify in court about it, if worst came to worst. *We* beat the gang, and *you* are clear of them; but how about *me?* Papa loves me dearly now! He has just been cursing me before his whole crew. And Herrick called me—but never mind! Won't this member of the great team have a jolly row with *our* opponents to-morrow, and next day, and the day after, and so on for forty years, while the other member of our team is far off, enjoying his professional earnings and his reputation as a Dead Game Sport!"

"Good Lord, Cecilia!" Beef shouted. "I never thought of that! Of course you can't stay at Slumber Sands——"

"You're a Dead Game Sport on the grid-iron, Beef, and in your classes, and in Wall Street, and in a fight with a pack of gamblers. But when it comes to team-work with me, you're an awful quitter! As soon as you're out of the scrimmage, you cut and run, leaving me to shift for myself."

"Now you come right along on this train with me," Beef advised gravely, "and I'll steer you to some nice quiet New York hotel. In the morning you can look up some friends and stay with them——"

"How clever!" Cecilia's laughter rang high. "I'll ask some old college classmate to let me use her spare room for the next forty years. Won't she be glad to see me!"

"In a week or so," Beef schemed desperately, "you might lease an apartment——"

"Where I should spend my mornings reading in the newspapers about the Runaway Cecilia Notte, the Notte Family Row, and the opinions of our butler, Dr. Parkhurst, and the editors on the great question —'Why Girls Leave Home.' What a timely warning to all the eligible young men! How the mama wives will wag their heads and say: 'I told you so, my dears! What can you expect from the daughter of a notorious plunger and bettor? They say she's lived all her life within the click of poker chips; and her dining-table has a roulette wheel hidden in it.'"

"Of course, if you're looking for eligible young men," Beef turned dismally toward her, "I can't give you any advice——"

"Of course you can't!" Her head tipped saucily, and there was the swiftest, smallest twinkle in her eyes. "If I can't have fair play at your hands, where shall I look for it? I'm doomed to be a homeless spinster, thanks to *your* team-work! You *won't* understand the signals, even when I yell them at you! You're tired of the team."

"Cecilia! Is that what you mean?" Beef seized her shoulders so hard that he frightened her. "Oh, let me come back on the team! I'll mind your signals and stick to the finish! Hold still, you little rogue! I can't kiss you straight!"

Cecilia broke away from him and drew off a few paces, and something brighter than the station lights was shining in her eyes. "No! No! Beef! I didn't mean *that!* I only wanted to go where you are going, so that you may come to know me—and maybe then—well, we shall see! You have never met me. The Cecilia whom you have known was a prejudiced woman, who never played fair with you. Let the real Cecilia be near you. I shall not bother you. Say that you are weary of me, and I will go——"

"Sh!" Beef swept her to him with gigantic tenderness. "I'd have run off with you, dear, the very first day I saw you, if I'd thought you were willing to play that game. But you didn't want to play, and a Dead Game Sport wouldn't compel——"

"You big funny!" Cecilia's laugh filtered through his coat-sleeve. "So that's why you ran away from me? Well, Beef, I hereby challenge you to a fifty-year go-as-you-please happiness contest with me——"

"Gee! There's *our* train! Quick!" Beef whooped. And, his great arm about her, he spun her over the gloomy road and tossed her aboard the last coach.

A band of late revelers entered their car at Jamaica and made merry over the young man who had entangled his coat-sleeve buttons in a beautiful brunette's tresses so badly that the conductor had to remove the ornaments with a jack-knife. The laughter of the car did not disturb the young man, for he was a Dead Game Sport.

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THE PICKET-LINE OF BUSINESS

BY HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

Author of "A KING IN KHAKI," "THE SKY-MAN," etc.

TAKING OUT A LOG OF IRONWOOD.

AS WE strolled out on the veranda, where the brandy and soda and the mosquitoes were, I congratulated Blakely on his cook. The dinner which that amiable Celestial had just given us would have counted as a good dinner anywhere in the world. And when your strained imagination accepted the bald, bare fact that Blakely's house was out in the middle of a five-hundred-mile swamp within fifty miles of the equator; that the nearest town was fourteen hours away by steam-launch, and totally inaccessible by any other means; and, finally, that a big python had got into the hen-house two nights before and swallowed all the chickens, and then lain down and gone to sleep because he was too big around to get out through the hole he had come in by —when you had taken all these things into account, the dinner became a miracle.

There was something made into soup, that tasted delicious after one had poured a glass of sherry into it. And then some huge crawfish, served cold with mayonnaise —prepared, remember, by a man who had probably never seen a lump of ice in his life. And then there was something made into an *entrée*, and after that something—but there is no use going on, because I don't know now what the mysterious something was. I don't believe it was the python, but, so far as Blakely knew, there was nothing to eat save the crawfish. Anyway, it tasted good enough to tempt your appetite as you sat in his big, punka-disturbed dining-room, with a glass of lukewarm whisky-soda at your elbow, the sweat rolling down your face, and the sand-flies nibbling at your ankles.

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I had begun taking this sort of thing somewhat for granted. My wife and I had often stopped at rest-houses and *dak* bungalows where there hadn't been a visitor in months, and we generally found the single, derelict servant in charge perfectly capable of extemporizing an excellent six-course dinner out of next to nothing at all. But this Chinaman of Blakely's deserved, I thought, the decoration. I would have hung it on him if I could. Instead, I congratulated Blakely. He smiled in a queer sort of way.

"Martin thinks he is going to try to poison me," he remarked. Martin was Blakely's junior, just a few months out of England—what they call a "creeper" in the Ceylon tea-plantations; only this wasn't Ceylon.

"Because he can't identify the *entrée?*" I guessed casually enough. The reflection slipped through my mind that it must be rather a bore to have a callow, homesick creeper sighing over meals like that for the joys of honest British cooking. But then I looked up at Blakely, and saw that he hadn't meant that at all.

"Poor devil!" he said. "It has shaken his nerve pretty badly, I suspect."

I asked him, incredulously, if he meant literally poison.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Arsenic or something. You see, he really is a good cook, and I had no end of trouble getting him. So when I found him stealing from me right and left, instead of sacking him off the job I dusted his jacket with a rattan—gave him a good licking. And Martin thinks he will poison me by way of revenge."

I hoped he would go on from there, but it needed one more question: "*Is* that a perfectly insane idea of Martin's, or might there be a grain of reason in it?"

"Oh, not insane at all. Chinamen are revengeful, especially when they can take their revenge safely. This man, of course, could do it without any trouble. But he hasn't any revenge coming to him, because

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COTTAGES ON STILTS AT LABUAN OFF THE COAST OF BORNEO WITHIN HAILING DISTANCE OF THE WILDS.

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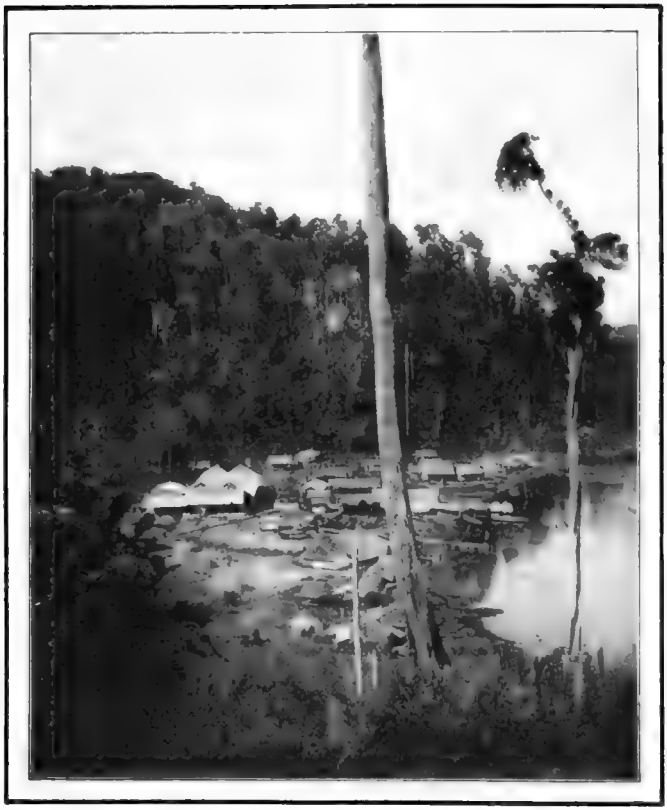

FACTORY IN A BORNEO SWAMP, WHERE CUTCH IS EXTRACTED FROM PLANTS.

impossible of anything but a jocular interpretation. And even now, a year after, it is a little hard to realize that Blakely meant it in literal, sober earnest. If I can make you realize that, I shall have succeeded in telling my story—the story of the men who form the outermost picket-line of the world's army of industry.

Before I came upon any of them, I had been calling them in my mind "pioneers," and thinking of them as the British analogue to the conquerors of our own plains and mining-camps.

I had begun to get a hint of the difference in London, where I presented certain letters I had brought with me from home, and sat chatting in rambling, comfortable, dingy offices in the heart of the city, with kindly old gentlemen whom one half expected to begin writing with a

he deserved the licking. He really had been stealing. That's what I can't make Martin see."

I wasn't quite sure that I saw it myself. "You mean," I asked, "that he would poison you if he didn't realize that you were justified in licking him?"

It came to about that, according to Blakely.

"You've staked your life on his sense of justice."

"It was that or let him go," said Blakely. "And the man is an absolutely first-class cook. It's a justifiable risk."

The year before, I should have taken that remark as

A BIT OF UNTOUCHED JUNGLE WHERE CREEPERS COVERED WITH LONG, STOUT, NATURAL FISH-HOOKS MAKE TRAVEL IMPOSSIBLE.

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quill pen, and who reminded one of Dickens. They gave me letters to their representatives in these far-off, unreal-sounding lands; and they wrote them out by hand themselves, if they didn't use a quill pen.

I didn't altogether visualize the other side of the picture at that time: Blakely sweating by candle-light over a rusty typewriter, pounding out long reports, explanations, and recommendations to these amiable gentlemen, who would discuss them around the long, black walnut table in a board-room—letters from a land they had never seen and never wanted to see and never would understand. But I did perceive that my letters were mandatory; that Blakely, for instance, was instructed to send his launch to meet me. And that shook the pioneer idea a little. For my notion of a pioneer is made up of two elements—love of freedom and love of adventure. Our early settlers were men who followed pretty directly the call of their own souls, and they courted surprises.

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CEYLON IS A FINISHED, CIVILIZED COUNTRY. ONE MOTORS OVER ROADS THAT WOULD BE A CREDIT TO MASSACHUSETTS.

NARROW LITTLE WATERWAYS GO LACING AND TWISTING THROUGH THE SWAMP, WHERE MONKEYS SWARM IN THE TOPMOST BRANCHES OF TREES.

This mandatory quality was evident when I read my letter to Blakely. (I did read it. Since the days of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern I hold that any man who delivers an unread letter of introduction is a fool.) When I read my letter to Blakely, it became evident that he did not go where he pleased, nor do what he pleased. And, as for courting surprise——

Somewhere east of Suez on the German Mail, a little knot of our passengers organ-

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ized themselves into a Sports and Entertainment Committee, and presently posted a notice concerning a fancy dress ball. To our Western innocence, this seemed like a distinctly sporting proposition. How could we contrive a costume unexpectedly like that, out on the high seas? We Americans were in a ferment. We racked our brains and devised all sorts of ingenuities, wondering all the while, in the backs of our minds, what the placid, unperturbed group of Englishmen, who didn't seem to be giving a thought to the ball, were going to do about it. We were more or less astonished, when the night came, to see a dignified, middle-aged Scotchman stalking about the deck, a complete and authentic Aladdin, lamp and all, as if he had just walked out of a costumer's; and to see, the next moment, the khedive of Egypt, the sultan of Turkey, a Hindoo rajah, and a Buddhist priest with his yellow parasol. When we got our breath and succeeded in recognizing the wearers as our imperturbable English friends, we asked in awed tones where they got their costumes.

"There is always a fancy ball," said Aladdin calmly. "I bought this rig years ago. I always carry it back and forth with me. It saves trouble."

They weren't exactly adventurers going off into the unknown, you see. They were outward bound to all sorts of strange, unheard-of places—the wilds of the Bornean jungle, the forests of the Burmese hinterland, the Cham states, and the tiger-infested wilds of the Malay Peninsula. But they were taking no dreams with them; no half-acknowledged hopes of great fortune. They were hardened, professional campaigners, going out to their places in the Picket Line, cannily fortified against all foreseeable exigencies, even the fancy ball on the ship that was taking them out.

They weren't all going to the outposts, of course. One of them, for instance, was going to a tea-plantation in Ceylon; and, learning that we expected to be within a hundred miles of his place, he and his wife invited us to make them a visit.

We did. We drove to their plantation, eighty-five miles, one morning, from Kandy, in a motor-car, over roads that would have been a credit to Massachusetts, through a country that is one of the paradises of the world—a cultivated, swarming country. And the talk around the dinner-table that night was of their dog-shows, and races; their tennis-matches; of a fractious hunter that had backed one of our guests in a dog-cart over the edge of a culvert; until, if it hadn't been for the heat and the punkas, and the native servants with the soft thud of their bare feet on the stone floors, we should have thought we were in England. The man who sat across the table from me was pointed out as having been the greatest gentleman jockey in Ceylon, until he was nearly killed in a steeplechase. And when we moved over into the drawing-room and opened the piano, we found they knew "The Dollar Princess" and "The Arcadians" and "Our Miss Gibbs" a good deal better than we did.

WE FOUND THE EAST RUBBER-MAD. THIS TREE HAS BEEN TAPPED, AND THE WHITE LINES ARE THE RUBBER MILK.

When we got a little over our daze, we said to ourselves that of course Ceylon was a civilized, finished country, with all the conventions and the constituted authorities in good working order. We needn't expect to see "pioneers" yet. We should come upon them presently—out in

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THE REAL "WILD MEN OF BORNEO"—HEAD-HUNTERS FROM THE INTERIOR. EVEN WITH THESE SAVAGES FOR NEIGHBORS, BUSINESS PIONEERS MAINTAIN THE FORMS OF CIVILIZED LIFE.

the wilds, in the jungle, somewhere.

But for a while we thought there weren't going to be any wilds. We would take an adventurous plunge into the unknown, only to bring up on the veranda of an English-speaking hotel and to find from one to a half dozen of our fellow passengers from the German Mail sitting comfortably around in long chairs ordering English drinks. The East is a big place on the map, but after a month or two we got to feeling that, humanly speaking, it was as small and cozy and gossipy as a New England village.

What bits of jungle we saw had been distinctly disappointing. Some friends of ours, who traveled with us in India, occasionally went out for a little shooting; and one of them, I remember, came in one night with a crocodile—"a wild crocodile," he assured me indignantly when I voiced certain suspicions about a well-trained, obedient saurian that came, when you clapped the hollow pieces of a cocoanut shell together, from the shallows of a certain Rajah's artificial lake and gobbled chunks of decayed meat which you bought from wily natives for something more than packing-house prices. I suppose that any place which has an untamed crocodile splashing about in it might be called wild. But it wasn't what we were looking for. There was a framework of civilization—white, English civilization—all through it. Wherever you went, it seemed, you never need miss your afternoon tea. Burma was just like India in that regard. The road to Mandalay, by one of the Irawadi steamships, is a much more civilized affair than the road from St. Louis to New Orleans.

But we found the wilds eventually. A few days steaming east from Singapore brought us up against the island of Borneo—the largest island in the world, if you will be polite enough to call Australia a continent. So far as I have been able to find out, no one has ever crossed it. They didn't know much more about it at Singapore than they did in Chicago, when I tried to learn the means of getting there. But they

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warned me solemnly that I ought to provide myself with sundry deadly weapons of various sorts as a protection against savage beasts, head-hunters, and the like; and they earnestly besought me to leave my wife behind. We were within hailing distance of the wilds at last!

There was a while, though, after our arrival at our first stopping-point, when we thought we were going to be disappointed again. We had had tea on the lawn in the Resident's garden—a rather formal, charmingly kept garden—and then we had dressed for dinner and been introduced to the household pets, including a lizard as big as a tom-cat, which made a noise like the whistle of an Atlantic liner in the distance. We had dined at length under the inevitable punka, and were now enjoying the Resident's excellent cigarettes.

He was a young-looking chap—an Irishman only two or three years out of Dublin University; and he sat in his dark veranda and told us, in his quiet, serious voice, tiger stories—stories of tigers turning into men and back into tigers, until we could feel our hair creep. He finally remarked, apologetically, that he had not been out very long, had only had two years in the F. M. S. service, and that he was still interested in these things. He was curious to go up one of the rivers far enough to see whether it was true that the natives up there had tails. But the Government didn't seem to think that that was part of the duties of a Resident—"especially since poor White was murdered," the young man concluded casually.

CLEARING THE JUNGLE FOR RUBBER-TREES. IN FIVE YEARS FROM THE TIME OF PLANTING, THESE TREES YIELD RUBBER GUM—AND AN ENORMOUS PROFIT.

"Who murdered him?" I asked.

"A couple of harmless lads," he told me. "We've got them in the jail there now, and we don't know just what to do with them."

"Not quite sure they did it, perhaps?" I suggested.

"Oh, beyond a doubt," he said. "They confessed it quite openly—gloried in it, in fact. They were incited to it by an old man—a local seer, with no end of a reputation for prophecy and that sort of thing. The

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rice crop had failed for two years, and the old chap laid it to poor White. Thought he'd blighted it with an evil eye. He was perfectly honest in his belief, I've no doubt, and the two lads thought they were doing a great public service in committing the murder. It leaves us in a very unsatisfactory dilemma, though. One doesn't like to hang a pair of perfectly amiable, well-meaning fanatics like those two boys. Whereas, if we don't hang them, why, killing the Resident will get to be a popular diversion. Any sort of an excuse will serve."

Yes, the dilemma was apparent. I imagined that poor White's successor was pretty clear in his mind what ought to be done.

"Where was White stationed?" I asked. "Far from here?"

"Oh, he was *my* predecessor," said our boyish-faced host, in some surprise. "I thought you knew."

These were the wilds! There was no mistake about it. It became additionally apparent a day or two later when we started up the river to visit a rubber plantation. I don't know just how far it was—thirty miles, perhaps. The better part of a day's journey in the launch, against the current; and the whole of it was through the solid, impenetrable Bornean jungle.

After an hour or two, the silence and the unbroken monotony of the green walls and the bright mirror of the river began to have an almost hypnotic effect. To break it, we asked one of the three silent boys who constituted the launch's crew whether there were any beasts, and waved a vaguely questioning hand toward the jungle.

By way of answer, he began blowing a series of rapid blasts on the launch whistle, and I thought, for a minute, that our Malay vocabulary, which comprised at that time about sixty words between us, had gone wrong. Then I saw he had understood. He pointed to the tree-tops. In all directions branches were being shaken violently, and the next minute we saw that monkeys were doing it—hundreds of monkeys perched up there in the topmost branches and shaking them at us. Whether in terror or derision we didn't know, and we hadn't Malay enough to ask. And two or three times during the journey, we scared up big, awkward birds that looked like Zoological Garden escapes.

For the rest there was nothing but the two high walls of solid jungle, and the bright streak of river between. And silence.

It was about four in the afternoon when we made out a white-clad figure standing on a rude wharf that extended out from a clearing.

"Glad to see you," he shouted. "Hurry along. You're just in time for tea."

Well, of course a man might drink tea and still be a pioneer. But Wallace wasn't.

Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. Where *he* happens to be doesn't matter so much. Your pioneer's treasure is all ahead of him. The jungle, the wilderness, lure him, challenge his imagination; his eyes see not what is, but what might be. And the picture begets a sort of relentless impatience in him. He doesn't mind sleeping on an army cot, barely and insufficiently sheltered. He doesn't mind eating the rudest fare off a tin plate. The present isn't important enough to think about.

Wallace's tea-table, in the shade of his big stone veranda, was covered with a cloth of fine linen drawn-work. He had a silver tea-service, and the cups were the thinnest English china. In the middle of the table there was a bouquet of flowers—not jungle flowers, garden flowers. Wallace had had the garden planted for that purpose. In the corner of the veranda there was another table with English and American magazines on it, and a late novel or two. Wallace saw pictures, but his pictures were of the past, not of the future. They were behind him in England. But stop and think for a minute of what Wallace might have seen, if he'd cared to look the other way.

If you bought any garden hose this spring, you probably still think of the man who sold it to you as a robber. But really it wasn't his fault. People woke up a couple of years ago to the fact that there wasn't rubber enough in the world to go around, and the price of rubber began going up like an elevator in the Metropolitan tower. When we got out to the East, we found it rubber-mad. Men were planting rubber-trees in their tea-plantations, in their gardens, almost in their very tennis-courts. Because in five years from the time you planted those trees you could begin making little scratches in the bark and collecting the pure rubber gum which exuded from them, and sell it for twenty-five cents a pound. In fact, you needn't plant the trees at all. All you had to do was to *intend* to

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plant them and you could capitalize the intention for almost anything you liked and find people to buy shares in it. And if you really had any rubber-trees of scratchable age— Well, there was one of our fellow passengers on the German Mail who had, and he had spent half a million dollars on a racing stable within the last year or two, and still didn't feel poor.

Wallace had about ten thousand acres of jungle. Some of it was cleared, and a little —enough to show the possibilities—in rubber-bearing trees. Every week the launch took a small packing-box of pure rubber down the river. Multiply the box by ten, by twenty, by fifty—the jungle was waiting there to do it for him. And yet Wallace planted his flower garden!

Back in India, an overpopulated country, with a complexly articulated civilization, a country of established and finished tradition, one could see that the Englishman must bring his civilization with him and live by his own standards rather than the natives'; must be a creature from another world altogether, either a god or a creature altogether beneath contempt. But the meek little brown people who cleared Wallace's jungle for him and scratched the bark of his rubber-trees, didn't need much impressing. It couldn't be to establish his prestige with them that Wallace had his garden and his books and his fine china and his long dinners. We wondered why, and we went away wondering.

We traveled a good many hundred miles along the Picket-Line and spent a good many weeks doing it. The gossipy coziness of the nearer East had disappeared. These men on the Picket-Line had never heard of each other. Each of them came straight out to his station and went straight back when he was relieved. There was Gray, whose rubber plantation had been pretty badly damaged, the week before we got there, by a herd of wild elephants that had broken out of the jungle. There was Armitage, who had a big tame orang-outang, like the man in Kipling's story, and went off into the interior and left us with it. He had a lot of other pets, too—a deer and a wa-wa, and a couple of geese that used to gather eagerly around the table and beg for breakfast. But, whatever their individual peculiarities, whether they shot big game, or played the piano, or took an interest in natural history, these men all lived essentially the way Wallace did. Their pictures and their dreams were all back home in England.

And now, at last, here was Blakely, out in the midst of his illimitable swamp—Blakely, who, as he sat there on his veranda after dinner, might have been one of the guests at that planter's dinner-party 'way back in Ceylon, without a change in his costume, or his manners, or the inflection of the well-bred, quiet voice that was telling me that he had risked his life rather than discharge a good cook.

"After all," I remarked, "I suppose you have licked Chinamen before. And you haven't been poisoned yet. I suppose you know how to do it. But I'll admit it seems that a Chinese coolie's sense of justice is a pretty slender thread for a man to hang his life on."

"That's all we've got out here," he said. "It's all we ever have to rely on. Oh, I admit you need something more than good intentions. You may violate their code unwittingly. They won't wait for explanations."

And then he told me a story:

When he came out here, five years ago, under the instructions of the great London trading company that employed him, to build its factory, he spent a good many days on a launch, steaming about the narrow little waterways that go lacing and twisting through the swamp, looking for a suitable building site. He finally selected this island because of its abundant supply of fresh water. He landed three hundred coolies and set about clearing the jungle. He had then, as now, one other white man with him. He had to feed his men and shelter them at a distance of fourteen hours by launch from anything that could be called a basis of supplies. The swamp was practically uninhabited, and he had to bring all but a handful of his coolies from the other side of the island, a thousand miles away. They worked pretty well for the first few days, and the work seemed to be progressing nicely.

And then he began to see signs of trouble. Part of the men quit working and gathered into sullen little groups; others joined them, muttering, excited, apparently afraid, undoubtedly mutinous. So Blakely got them together and asked what the trouble was. They told him that this was a bad island and that they wouldn't work here. When

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Blakely asked what was the matter with it, they told him there were devils on it.

"More than anywhere else?" Blakely asked.

They assured him it was so. Finally, after a good deal of diplomacy, he got the story. It seemed that in the good old days before Rajah Brooke had cleared this part of the world of pirates, one notable pirate had brought all his prisoners here and killed them off. Old stock, it is to be presumed, that he had had on hand a long time, and despaired of ever getting any ransom for. It must have been a pretty extensive murder to have left a tradition of horror behind it in that part of the world. But there the tradition was, and here the devils were still. And the coolies were working themselves into a state of panic terror which would lead, eventually, to another murder or two.

There was no possibility of Blakely's changing his base and picking out another island, for he knew there was no other fresh water within fifty miles. He thought it over pretty quickly, and then addressed the meeting in Malay.

If there were devils here, he said quite seriously, it was clearly necessary to conjure them away. He wanted to know if there wasn't a conjurer present who could undertake the job. There was some discussion after this, and then it appeared that no one among them was enough of a conjurer to undertake a task of this magnitude. Well, then, did any one know where such a conjurer could be found? There was a hermit down the coast a little way, a hundred miles or so, who could do the job if he could be persuaded to come. So Blakely sent a launch after him with instructions to fetch him at all costs. It took a day or so to find him, another day and a promise of one hundred dollars—a fabulous fortune—to persuade him to come. And it took three days more of the most strenuous kind of conjuring to drive out the devils to the satisfaction of the coolies and the hermit.

After it was done, and the hermit had been paid and sent home again in the launch, Blakely had to sit down at his typewriter and frame a report of the proceeding to the directors in London. One can see that it would read rather queerly across the black walnut table in the office that might have been described in the pages of "David Copperfield." Blakely could see it, too, and when he had finished the report and lighted his pipe and transported himself, in imagination, back to Bishopsgate Street Without, he tore up the damp pages and contented himself with a single laconic item in his expense account—"To conjuring devils off the island," so much.

Of course that only postponed the evil day. They kept him explaining about that conjurer for months. They couldn't understand why, instead of truckling to the base superstitions of the natives, Blakely hadn't appealed to the constituted authorities.

I could see that Blakely's way was much quicker and infinitely cheaper in the long run, and that very likely he would have been murdered before the authorities, whoever they were, could have taken a hand in the matter. But the directors' question set me wondering who the "constituted authorities" were, and I asked him about it.

"There aren't any," he said. Then he corrected himself. "Oh, there's a jail at Pontianak where they give prisoners one day out a week; and if they don't get back by six o'clock after their day out, they are locked out for the night."

"There can't be any great incentive to escape," I reflected.

"Nowhere to escape to," said Blakely, "but that—" and he waved his hand down to the hillside, where a bit of untouched jungle loomed black in the moonlight.

I was learning to take things literally. Up to the time of my visit, I had always considered the phrase "impenetrable jungle" as a picturesque exaggeration. But I had made an experiment with that particular bit this morning. There were paths through it, of course, and I had followed one of them to within perhaps fifty yards of the other side. The voices of some men at work over there gave me the direction, and seemed so near that I decided to leave the path and go straight through. I took one step and then another and felt a faint tug at my sleeve. There was nothing peremptory about it. It was as if a friend had said: "Wait a minute." I looked back to see what it was; saw nothing, and looked about for a place to put my other foot. Then the thing that had touched my sleeve so lightly took hold. It was a creeper about the size of a telegraph-wire and with, I am willing to bet, pretty near as much tensile strength; covered all over with long, stout, natural fish-hooks.

I put my other foot down to get my balance, and a loop of green cane an inch thick

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slipped over my ankle. That was rather disconcerting, and I made a sort of plunging movement backward. The cane gave a little. It was somewhere about a hundred feet long and could afford to give; but it didn't let go. And the "Wait-a-bit"—that was Blakely's name for it—caressed me in a dozen new places with its long festoons. When, with Blakely's assistance, I got back on to the path again, I was willing to take the phrase "impenetrable jungle" literally.

If that was all there was to escape into—that and the marsh—I didn't wonder that the prisoner was glad to come back to jail, after his day off."

Blakely's rattan lay across the table between us. I picked it up and tapped it against my leg.

"Then," I said, "this is the only constituted authority on the place."

"Certainly, I have never sent a man to jail in Pontianak," said Blakely.

He told me, though, that the Resident of Pontianak had been remonstrating with him. He was a thick, hard-eating sort of Dutchman, and he sometimes came out and paid Blakely a visit, and he was exercised into what Blakely called "a boiling stew" by the fact that he and Martin were in the habit of walking up alone from the factory to the bungalow. Any dissatisfied coolie, the Resident pointed out, could hide in the jungle and kill one of them with a bolo as they came by. The Resident thought they ought to have some armed police and, more particularly, one man apiece to follow them, ten paces behind, wherever they went.

Blakely disturbed him still further by asking him what was to prevent the armed guard from doing the job himself.

"If they want to kill you," said Blakely, "bless you, they'll kill you no matter how careful you are. All your precautions can accomplish is to put the notion into their stupid heads and make them think you're afraid. But I don't wonder that the idea worries Martin. He's never been out of England before."

"It's not Martin I'm wondering about," said I. "It's you."

Already he had told me that he had been out here five years. Here! He had a wife and daughter back in England. He had shown me their pictures. In a couple of years more he could go back to them. It gives one's brain a wrench just to think of it. And yet he was as sane as I. There wasn't a jerk about the even, nervous movements of his hands. He wasn't afraid to laugh out loud. I didn't see how he had managed it. So I asked him to account for himself.

"That's easy," he said. "I've always had a good pair of razors and dry underclothes, and the *Daily Mail*. And, most of the time, a good cook."

"Even at the risk of your life," I commented.

He leaned forward a little and spoke more earnestly: "There's more risk in going without a shave for three days than there is in licking a Chinese cook," he said. "The one risk a man mustn't run, under any circumstances, is the risk of forgetting that he's white. That's the danger out here."

The risk of forgetting that he's white!

Was that the clue I had been looking for? Did that explain Wallace, with his silver tea-service and his recent novels? My mind went racing back. I wondered what would happen to a man who *did* forget. Then I pulled my mind back to Blakely.

"You have to do everything for yourself out here," he was saying. "If you're careless about your health and fall ill, there's no doctor to appeal to. If you make an enemy, there's no policeman to appeal to. And if you begin to go rotten morally, there's no public opinion to keep you straight. There's no more to prevent my killing my cook than there is to prevent his killing me. Whether you die of cholera or get yourself murdered—whatever happens, it's your own doing."

He paused a minute, then asked rather suddenly:

"Did you ever walk along a narrow plank that lay on the ground and wonder, suddenly, how you'd feel if it were a hundred feet up in the air? The plank's plenty wide enough to walk on, but, for the lack of anywhere else to step, you'd turn a bit giddy and perhaps fall off. Well, a man's like that always. He needs the touch of something outside himself. And out here, where we can't have our friends, we have to rely on our habits. So, at the end of a day's work, where your will has been law so far as you could make it stick; where everything, even your own life, depends on the sort of laws you make—it's a pretty healthy thing to shave and change and sit down to a good dinner. And sitting down to a good dinner in a part of the world where there's nothing civilized to eat, involves having a good cook."

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The LIVING DEAD

BY HERBERT KAUFMAN

BATTLES have you and I to fight, and we fight
with the souls of men;
We rise and fall, then we heed the call,
And we rise and fall again.
We fight for the right and the sake of fight,
And we fight at the call of hate;
We stab with wit and we clench with grit,
But we play the game as the rules are writ,
With never a damn for Fate.

We sometimes gain and we sometimes lose, but it isn't
upon the sleeve,
For we never show when we feel the blow,
And we smile while we hurt and grieve;
When our heart-chords strain and we sting with pain,
And our souls are a livid moan,
We hold it in with a masking grin,
And the world can't tell that we didn't win,
And the world can't hear the groan.

We buy at a price that the Fool can't count and the
Coward's afraid to pay;
And the most we gain is the blind, black pain;
Yet we keep right in the fray.
We can take the knife till it takes our life,
And we live in our empty shell;
We are dead and gone, but we battle on,
For only WE know of the place that's torn,
And only WE know the Hell.

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The SCARLET GERANIUM HAT

by ELEANOR HALLOWELL ABBOTT

Author of "MOLLY MAKE-BELIEVE," "THE SICK-A-BED LADY," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY I. DOUGHERTY

WHEN some one whom you know very well has just died, it is astonishing to go and sit in a great, conscious, dressed-up, rose-reeking, music-tinkling public place like the corridor of a fashionable hotel, and see how many people whom you don't know at all are radiantly, exultantly, one might almost say ostentatiously, alive.

It was Monday night that Faustina Meade killed herself. It was surely no later than the following Saturday morning that I went to the corridor of the fashionable hotel, bearing conspicuously in my somewhat embarrassed hand the Scarlet Geranium Hat all wrapped up in a big, noisy, white tissue-paper cornucopia that completely transformed the hat's utilitarian head-gear purposes into the shape and radiance of a most magnificent bouquet.

Now although this is not at all the melancholy story of a girl who died, but altogether the cheerful story of a Scarlet Geranium Hat, I can not decently introduce the Hat until I have at least explained about the Girl.

It was just after supper on Monday that Faustina came into my room and asked me —a bit diffidently—if I would kindly lend her twenty-five dollars to buy a Scarlet Geranium Hat which she affirmed quite passionately she could no longer live without. When I recovered enough breath to speak at all, I spoke a speech that was distinctly unpleasant.

"No, you old landscape painter!" I said. "I'll be hanged if I will!"

Just for a second the expression in Faustina's eyes startled me a little. But for once in her life she did not linger to argue the matter. Certainly from my point of view it did not seem a very tactful moment to remind her that she had not yet paid me for the grim, dingy black hat that had also seemed equally necessary to her personal welfare the previous winter, nor yet to call her attention to the fact that I myself had become inordinately interested that very day in a frisky white lilac *chapeau* which had coquetted with me quite brazenly from the plate-glass window-mirror of a down-town shop. In common justice to myself, it is only fair to state that it was my own longing for the white lilac hat that put the most acidity into my refusal.

Subsequently it developed that Faustina had straightway proceeded from my room to the rooms of all the other Art Student girls in the house, made approximately the same request, received approximately the same answer, for the same approximate reasons, flaunted herself off in a great dudgeon to the studio which an overworked janitor firmly declined to reopen for her,

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ALMOST NOTHING IS AS PLEASANT TO UNPACK AS A NEW SPRING HAT!

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drifted back with increasing irritation to her own room, tumbled rather disconsolately into her bed, found herself unable to sleep, started fussing and fretting a bit, and then jumped up suddenly and killed herself with an overdose of something, just before midnight.

The note that Faustina left behind her was characteristically trite. "If I'd had a mother," wrote Faustina, "I'd have gone home instead."

Now although none of us liked Faustina as a Person, the instant, of course, that Death changed her into a Mystery, we were almost beside ourselves with shock and sorrow and an awful sickening sense of spiritual remorse that out of our own individual indulgences and extravagances not one of us had been willing to deny herself the tiniest bit toward the gratification of Faustina's last expressed wish on earth. Yet not one of us for a second deluded or tortured herself with any unwholesome sentimentality into the false belief that Faustina *living* would ever have seemed any more sweet-tempered or interesting or companionable to us, or that we were under any conceivable obligations whatsoever to provide Faustina's clothes for her, or even that Faustina had actually killed herself for the sake of a Scarlet Geranium Hat.

To every one of us, on the contrary, it was most rationally evident that it wasn't so much the lack of the Scarlet Geranium Hat as the lack of the things which the Scarlet Geranium Hat symbolized that had finally so discouraged Faustina Meade with life —the thought, as it were, of all the world's various and sundry bright spring luxuries which she would never, never be able to possess because of all the gloomy, dark winter necessities which she had never yet been able to pay for.

But let that be as it may, no conceivable number of "buts" or "ifs" or general suppositions could possibly controvert the fact that Faustina Meade was quite dead.

With the exception, then, of Jane, Hortense, and myself, all the students at the Art School clubbed together immediately—why, they could not even wait till Thursday night!—and bought wonderful real flowers for Faustina—roses, violets, hyacinths, Easter lilies—fifty dollars' worth, seventy-five dollars' worth, maybe even a hundred dollars' worth. Yet just twenty-five little round dollars invested in a bit of coarse straw and a few artificial geraniums would have tided Faustina completely over her immediate emotional emergency, forwarded her safely into the summer with a distinct sense of mental stimulation, and eased her even in the second and third seasons with a certain indefinable pride in the immortality of good material. All of which goes to show, apropos of Faustina's meager popularity, that any old person is good to you when you're sick or dead, but only a Real Friend will ever make any sacrifice for you when you are perfectly well.

In the specially acute and tearful remorse which Jane and Hortense and I suffered concerning Faustina, a Scarlet Geranium Hat became at once the most significant symbol of the Real Friend whom poor Faustina had never, never possessed. That's why we didn't buy any flowers for Faustina!

Now though I realize perfectly well that there is no particular sense in it at all, the fact remains that, instead of sending mutable posies to people who can no longer appreciate them, it has always and invariably been the custom among Jane, Hortense and me—ever since we first began to share our hearts and our homes and our clothes with each other—to signalize the passing of any common Friend or Acquaintance or even Unknown Newspaper Hero by delivering over anonymously to some utterly disconnected, utterly unconcerned, utterly cheerful stranger, the one little gift which seemed most to symbolize the unattained "Heart's Desire" of the Person Who Had Passed—the one little decent act that seemed most to typify the particular kindness which, by reason of our ignorance, or our indifference, or our natural conventionality, we had somehow withheld from the One Who Needed It Most.

Thus, when the janitor's little boy died, we, who had never evinced the slightest conceivable interest in the child, sent now, for his suddenly accentuated sake, a shining, bright velocipede to an equally saucy small lad whom we met on the way to the Art School every day. And when Jane's giddy, music-mad cousin Veronica was killed in an automobile accident on the opening night of the opera, we gave a couple of "Lohengrin" tickets to the tired old singing teacher next door. And when a young fellow whose newspaper portrait had greatly interested us, lost his life in a terrible battle against Arctic odds in one of the big geographical

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adventures of the century, we collected among our three selves as much money as we could readily spare from our horseback riding and our face-massage and our matinée tickets, and sent an altogether different kind of young fellow off into the Adirondacks on an altogether different kind of battle for life, which he now, the big doctor says, will have at least one chance in ten of winning. The lad up in the Arctic, you see, never had any chance at all, just because there wasn't any one in sight to give him a helping hand.

But, of course, as I said, the whole scheme has to be worked out absolutely anonymously. For indeed I do not know anything more horridly disconcerting to a bashful spiritual endeavor of this sort than to have the surprised stranger whom you involve in the affair suddenly begin to preen himself, and stick out his chest, and run around among his neighbors soliloquizing as to just what particular quality it is in himself that has interested you so amazingly, when all the time it isn't the person at all that you are interested in, but only the *present*. Giving presents to people is the simplest possible kind of an undertaking. It's the giving people to presents that is the really delicate matter.

The finding of just the right girl to give to Faustina's hat proved certainly one of the most difficult gift-problems that we were ever concerned in.

Here now, upon my honor, *exit* all melancholy reference to Faustina, and here also, upon my honor, enters the cheerful story of the Scarlet Geranium Hat.

First of all, you must understand that in choosing and purchasing the Scarlet Geranium Hat we spent infinitely more money than we could possibly afford at that moment in order to procure on the inside of the hat the particular trade-mark which stood for everything most distinctive in our city's millinery line, and thus prove to ourselves and each other that for the chastened Time-Being, at least, we begrudged no man anything. More than that, it took all three of us girls to bear the Hat safely home. Hortense carried the box. Jane held the umbrella over it. I scouted ahead through the crowd and cleared the way and paid the car-fares. Once in our room, we dumped the great box on the floor and squatted down all around it and commenced to unpack it with really hectic interest.

Almost nothing is as pleasant to unpack as a new spring hat! First of all, just the astonishing lightness of so big a box is in its way rather a piquant surprise. Then the soft, white, crumply mass of tissue-paper seems always as exotic as a fluff of chill-less snow. Best of all, the Hat itself is sure to be such a—Posy.

Personally, I have never in all my life seen a hat that made me feel the way this Scarlet Geranium Hat made me feel. Just the successfulness of it drove you mad for work! Just the becomingness of it drove you mad for play! The scarlet of it was vivid with the vividness of artificial coloring added to human lips. The straw of it was golden with an amazingly rejuvenated and shimmering sort of succulence about it, as though even along the dark and dingy shelves of the merchant's storeroom the Sap of the Spring had harried its glad way back to stalk and husk.

Yet it wasn't exactly the size of the Hat, and it wasn't exactly the shape of it, nor yet alone its lovely radiance that could completely account for the extraordinary sense of exhilaration that emanated from every gleaming surface of its straw or dusky depth of its velvet. It was a Hat of Destiny! No one who beheld it could have doubted for an instant that it was a Hat of Destiny! The only possible trouble was that neither Jane nor Hortense nor I could quite agree just what that Destiny was!

It was black-haired, oriental-looking Hortense who made the first suggestion, Hortense being near-engaged at the moment to a Harvard Medical Student.

"Why—it would be—almost a—Mission," stammered Hortense, "why, it would—be—almost a Mission—just to wear that Hat through the Boston hospitals every day!"

Little Jane, however, is afraid of hospitals. To Jane's blond, poetical mind a green iron bench in the Public Garden just at sunset time presented infinitely superior humanitarian possibilities.

"Wouldn't it be sweet?" mused Jane, half here, half there, "wouldn't it be—sweet to make that Hat the first glad sight that met the tired shop-people's eyes as they came trooping home from work?"

"Humph!" I sniffed at Hortense! "*Humph!*" I sniffed at Jane! More than this "Humph" I had nothing to say, so I

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just cried.—Never have I seen a Hat so *covetable!*

Readily, then, from one fact and another, you can see for yourself that the Scarlet Geranium Hat was not at all a Hat to be disposed of lightly or idly among ourselves. Neither was its dear gorgeousness to be bestowed unwisely on some pert-faced, inflammable young shop-girl, nor even exchanged philanthropically for the dingy plaid shawl on some starving beggar's head. In all congruity, the Scarlet Geranium Hat must be given to a girl of distinctly our own caste and kind—a girl as subject as we were to the ups and downs of general fashions and specific finances—a girl preferably of talent—a girl preferably in the throes and stress of some immediate mental emergency—a girl as handsome as Hortense, if possible—a girl as gentle as Jane, if probable—a girl even as erratic as I am, if she couldn't help it.

Surely in the soft-carpeted precincts of a big city hotel the Girl-Whom-We-Were-Looking-For would prove most likely and most quickly to be found.

Now you see I have just arrived back again at the hotel sofa where I was sitting nervously in the second paragraph of this story. From a literary standpoint, my narrative possesses surely a very long introduction. But scientifically speaking, the story is quite legitimately like an iceberg.—I forget the exact proportions of icebergs, but it seems to me that the scheme is something as astonishing as seven parts under water to one part out. So no matter how little the point of my story proves to be, there certainly wouldn't have been any point at all if there hadn't been such an extraordinary amount of circumstances—below the surface. From now on I will scramble just as fast as possible to my climax.

It was exactly eight o'clock in the morning when I arrived at the big hotel. More than being eight o'clock, it was one of those bright, crisp, indescribably adventuresome spring mornings when you could have discovered America, or invented a flying-machine, or designed a new wall-paper, or borrowed your car-fare from a perfect stranger without the tremor of an eyelid.

It was exactly a quarter of four in the late, well-bred, chicken-hearted afternoon that I left the big hotel.

Between those hours, by actual count, just two hundred and ninety-three women who couldn't possibly have fitted the Scarlet Geranium Hat flitted in and out of my immediate vista.

Face by face, feature by feature, type by type, I sat and scanned the changing feminine throng. The morning was exciting, the noon interesting, the afternoon interminable. Pretty faces, plain faces, clever faces, dull faces, faces with histories, faces with prophecies, passed and repassed before my critical vision. Just how I was to recognize the Right Girl when I saw her did not worry me for a moment; just how I was to thrust the Scarlet Geranium Hat upon her after I did recognize her gave me not a second's anxiety. What's the use of being young, anyway, unless "sufficient to the emergency is the impulse thereof"?

The only thing that really troubled me at all was the frank suspicion and disapproval with which the hotel maid eyed my long day's sojourn.

But her manner to me was Southern hospitality itself compared with her manner to a boy who was already waiting in the corridor when I arrived there.

I admit that there was something extraordinarily incongruous about his presence there in that ornate, luxuriant, well-fed room—though I shouldn't know at all how to describe him except to say that he was exactly the sort of person whom you almost invariably meet on a day when you've just spent fifty dollars for a hat—the sort of a person who makes every extraneous, extravagant article of clothing on you *ache*, from your gold-inlaid tortoise-shell side-combs to the intricate embroidery on your Jap-silk stockings. He was very thin, even emaciated; just beginning to be shabby, with the peculiarly harrowing shabbiness of good clothes going to seed; hands in his pockets because there was probably nothing else in his pockets; eyes like a tired old man's; mouth like a half-scared child's—everything about him "all in, down and out," as far as probabilities were concerned, and yet withal showing such a definite air of distinction that even the worldly trained maid was a little afraid to interfere with him, lest the snub to a Nonentity should prove to be an insult to a Celebrity.

Probably, though, as I don't like boys very much, I should never have really noticed him at all if he hadn't been so impishly skilful in curving one knee backward so that the strict maid had never even sus-

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pected that he had a very strange-looking leather bag, all punched full of holes like a home-made tin lantern, cuddled close on the floor beside him. For some reason which I have never yet been quite able to fathom, the maid at this particular hotel does not allow even perfectly well-dressed people to put perfectly good-looking bags on the floor.

Then, just as I was beginning to speculate gleefully how much longer the Shabby Boy would be able to evade the reproof which had overtaken every other bag-owner in the room, a little girl very near me began to munch luscious, fragrant chocolate peppermints, and the orchestra out in the hall somewhere began to play a tune that sounds like gold rose-petals slipping through harp-strings, and a very fashionably gowned woman came bustling in to keep an appointment. And partly because I was tired, and partly because I was hungry, and partly because I was beginning to feel altogether idiotic and self-conscious and bored concerning the Scarlet Geranium Hat—but *mostly* because Faustina would never, never be able to eat nice smelly candy any more, or tap her foot to a tune, or laugh at the funny way the new dress-skirts hunch around the ankles, I began to cry very suddenly and quietly all to myself.

When I looked up again, the big Shabby Boy was gone, and a very small, spruce bell-boy was walking through the room calling "Hall and Damon! Hall and Damon!" —And because that happened to be the name of the firm that had made the Scarlet Geranium Hat, my knees gave a surprised little jerk and my great rustling white tissue-paper cornucopia rolled over on the floor and fairly exploded with scarlet geraniums and straw, so that everybody saw at once that it wasn't a bouquet, but a Hat; and when I jumped to pick it up the maid came rushing to rearrange my chair, and the bell-boy grinned and said: "Oh?—Hall and Damon?—Well, all right, Mrs. Van Carter will see you now!" And the maid looked back over her shoulder and murmured something about "the tradespeople's waiting-room being at the other end of the corridor." And just for a second there I stood staring dumbly from bell-boy to maid, yet pointing all the time perfectly definitely at myself.

"What?" I stammered at last. "Mrs. Van Carter will—see me—now?—See *me*—now? —*M-E?*" —And then I was so mad—so mad—that I just laughed instead. "Well, why not?" I argued suddenly to myself. "Maybe this is the clue I've been waiting for all day!"

So without another word I gathered up the Hat and the tissue-paper as well as I could, and followed the little bell-boy up four whizzing elevator flights, and down along a dark, narrow hall-way to the door of Mrs. Van Carter's apartment. And every single step of the way the situation seemed funnier and funnier and funnier to me, until the door of the apartment opened —and then nothing in all the world seemed funny to me at all. For there in a big room already more or less occupied by half a dozen other outsiders, herself at that particular moment deeply engrossed in a very severe-looking interview with the Shabby Boy, sat The One Woman in Boston Whom I Cordially Detest—though up to this time I had never known her name nor cherished any more derogatory information concerning her than that once in the subway she had stepped on me a little harder than seemed really necessary, and that once when I was buying a Symphony ticket she had elbowed me out of line. Perhaps, indeed, a good many people loved her very dearly; but somehow to me it never seemed exactly courteous for any mortal woman to go about in public looking so superior.

Now as I tumbled down awkwardly into the first chair I could reach and stared round in real terror at my companions—the Nervous Manicurist, the Worried-Looking Shampooer, the Fidgety Messenger Boy, the Qualmish Clergyman—and racked my brains as to just how I was going to escape from the whole awkward dilemma, there came flashing into my mind, perfectly incongruously, perfectly irrelevantly, a long-forgotten, mischievous speech of an old, wry-humored gardener of ours.

"Little Miss," the old fellow had said, "Little Miss, if Luck has it that you yourself should ever be rich, don't you go around trying to acquire salvation through stained-glass windows or plush-upholstered pray-easys; but just you get down on the cold-kneed floor every night of your life and ask your God:

'Dear God, make me comfortable to work for!—And while your mind is on it, dear God, please make me polite to borrow money of!'"

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"I CAN LEND YOU—FIFTY DOLLARS—JUST AS WELL AS NOT!
AND MORE THAN THAT, I'D REALLY LIKE TO LEND IT TO YOU."

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Then, just as my scared mouth was beginning to relax the merest trifle at one corner, it was borne in upon me very acutely—through ear, through eye, through general flushing embarrassment—that Borrowing Money was just exactly the one topic in the world that the Shabby Boy and the Superior Lady were discussing so earnestly. Equally acutely, as I stared from the Boy's humiliation to the Woman's smug complacency, it was borne in upon me that by the same drooping type of eyelid, the same unusual twist of nostril, by the same odd, haughty poise of the shoulder, the Boy had at least some remote blood-right to hope that if he really was in a hole the Superior Lady would be willing to help him out.

And the Superior Lady was being very nasty to him—plain, hateful, patronizing—nasty. Just as though anybody in your own world ever asked you for money merely for the fun of asking for it! Just as though anybody, finding himself with five or ten minutes' extra time on his hands, would say: "Well, as I haven't got anything else to do, I guess I'll just run round to Aunt Ekka's and borrow a little money." Certainly anybody who knew anything at all could have seen at a glance that the Shabby Boy had stayed awake a good many nights, and gone pretty hungry a good many days, and walked around the hotel block a good many times, and swallowed a good many swallows, before he ever worked up his courage to ask such a favor of this particular relative.

Maybe the Superior Lady really intended to help him at the last; but it was perfectly evident that she did not intend to help him until she had completely impressed the Manicurist, the Shampooer, the Messenger Boy, the Clergyman, and especially—Herself, with her own wisdom, her own piety, her own infinite sagacity. Certainly whatever question the Boy had asked her, he had asked in a whisper—the low, quick, nervous whisper of the fast-driven and much-worried. Certainly whatever answer the Superior Lady vouchsafed him, she gave in the clear, slow, utterly well-modulated, utterly penetrating tones of the sickeningly well-bred. Slinking farther and farther back into his chair, now white with sullenness, now red with humiliation, the Shabby Boy sat watching his tormentor. Nothing but the direst physical need could have kept any young thing so meek!

There was no slinking droop, however, to the Superior Lady's figure. Straight and stiff as a foreign soldier, she sat 'way forward on the edge of her chair and continued her inquisition, lifting a soft, white, much-bejeweled hand from time to time to brush an imaginary wisp of hair from her wonderful brow.

"Fifty dollars is a—good deal of money," argued the Superior Lady trenchantly. "And—even with a fortune—such as mine," said the Superior Lady, "one must give an account of one's stewardship. And how can I tell," droned the Superior Lady—"how can I tell, if I lend you fifty to-day, that you won't be round to-morrow and want another fifty, and the day after and want another, and the day after?—And how can I be sure that what you have told me is true?" And "Albert, do you smoke?" and "Albert, do you drink?" asked the Superior Lady.

For just one horrid second the Shabby Boy lifted his eyes to mine across the room, and I met the look blankly as if I were utterly deaf, dumb, blind, to everything going on about me. Furtively, then, I saw his tortured eyes shift to the Manicurist's face as though to reassure himself that she also was beyond the zone of hearing, seeing, understanding. But the Manicurist giggled audibly.

Then because, when there is so much real Death in the world, it does seem a pity that everybody can't be just a little bit kinder to everybody else, I was so mad—so mad—that again I just laughed instead. And I jumped up and crossed the big room with the great white tissue-paper package in one hand and my perfectly empty purse in the other, and I walked right over close to the Shabby Boy, grinning all the while just about as idiotically as a Cheshire cat, and thrust the purse fatuously into his astonished hand.

"I can lend you—fifty dollars—just as well as not!" I said. "And more than that, I'd *really like to lend it to you!*"

Then, just as the Shabby Boy jumped up in real consternation, and the Superior Lady reached round suddenly to ring a bell for help or something, I turned quick to the Boy and whispered:

"S-s-h! If I'm willing to help you out of a hole, aren't you willing to help me out of one? For goodness' sake—help me get out of this room!"

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Then I turned and bolted—ignominiously, just like any other detected impostor who had sought to obtain gold or salvation or even amusement "under false pretenses."

Somewhere out of the corner of my eye I had a vision or a reflection of the Shabby Boy grabbing up his funny leather satchel and plunging after me, waving my purse in the air. Certainly I managed to elude him in the elevator—though from floor to floor in my interminable-seeming wire-cage drop from sky to earth I caught occasional plaid-iron glimpses of him in another elevator. Once on the street I eluded him with a little less certainty. Walk as fast as I could, scudding by the shops, dodging through the crowds, I could not seem to outstrip the consciousness of my bead purse being thrust out at me from a dozen different angles, from a dozen different street-corners. Then, just as I tried to take a short cut through the Public Garden, a voice that sounded pretty sick called out to me:

"Oh, won't you *please* stop and get your purse? I'm all in!"

And I looked around just in time to see the Shabby Boy drop his funny leather bag and reel down suddenly on one of the benches, with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. And I went back as politely as possible and sat down on the other end of the bench and dug my heels into the gravel and thought how funny it was for a person who was being pursued to sit down and wait till the pursuer got his breath again.

"There wasn't anything in the purse, anyway!" I felt obliged in all honor to confess.

When the Boy didn't pay any attention to that statement, I felt sure that he was pretty sick.

For almost five minutes then we sat in absolute silence—the Boy still all collapsed, with his head in his hands, I still digging my heels into the gravel. Rather disturbingly I remembered the story of a very tired man and girl of my acquaintance who sat down once in the Public Garden to rest, and a policeman came along and said: "If you've got any home, you'd better go to it!" I wondered if the Shabby Boy and I looked as domestic as that. But however we looked, there didn't seem to be anything very definite to do about it; so I just sat there staring at the grass, and sniffing at the pansies, and planning my summer dresses, and—just being young. Just being young is absorbing enough occupation for almost anybody!

Very laboriously after awhile—through constant interruptions of blue sky and green turf and flaunting tulip beds—I evolved three perfectly sane-sounding questions. And the first question was, "What's the matter?" And the second question was, "Are you in trouble?" And the third question was, "Couldn't anybody help you?"

But what I really asked when I actually found my tongue was: "What in creation have you got in that funny-looking bag?"

"Nothing but a monkey," mumbled the Shabby Boy drearily.

Then, because I am more afraid of monkeys than of anything else in the world, I screamed right out loud.

"A *monkey!*" I gasped. "You don't mean a perfectly good monkey?"

Very slowly the Shabby Boy raised his head from his hands and stared at me a bit quizzically.

"There's no such thing as a 'perfectly good monkey,'" he said.

Then, because we were both pretty young and both pretty nervous, and there wasn't anything else to do, we both laughed a little.

"Considering how pleased we seem to be with each other," I volunteered flippantly, "it's a pity we couldn't have met earlier in the day—you with a monkey on your hands and I with a 'white elephant'!"

"A white elephant?" quizzed the Boy, with a sickly sort of perplexity.

Rustlingly I unwound the twisted tissue-paper and held up the Scarlet Geranium Hat to the Boy's surprised gaze.

"Isn't it a—*darling?*" I said. "It cost fifty dollars!"

With an expression of real horror the Boy reached out one shaky hand and just barely touched a scarlet velvet petal.

"Fifty—dollars—for—*that?*" he stammered. "Oh, God!"

With real bravado I reached out and kicked my toe very lightly against the brown leather bag.

"Tell me—about—the—monkey," I asked, quite casually.

The Shabby Boy's head dropped down again into his hands. "There's nothing to tell," he mumbled again. "You can have him if you want to."

"Why don't you keep him yourself?" I said, a bit tartly.

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"Because I'm not going to stay," he muttered.

"Not going to stay where?" I insisted.

"Not going to stay—anywhere!" he answered. His words were almost indistinguishable.

"Aren't you any good—at all?" I ventured facetiously.

"No," said the Boy. There was no humor in his answer.

"Isn't — there — anybody — in — all—the—world—who—likes—you?" I cried out, with my nose crinkled up almost perfectly tight with astonishment.

"My mother likes me," he acknowledged sullenly.

The utter directness and simplicity of his answers made me laugh a little.

"You've got the tiniest sort of an accent to your voice," I suggested irrelevantly. "Not exactly a foreign accent, but a—sort of a—twisted tropical tone, like a person who usually talks with a flower in his mouth. Where do you come from?"

And then because, as some wise person has said, "When the heart is full the brain leaks," the Boy began quite suddenly to tell me his story.

I think I won't tell you just precisely where his home was. At least it was not Bermuda. But certainly it was one of those far southern islands which the Pessimists characterize as white coral flavored with young onions, and the Optimists as white coral perfumed with Easter lilies. One of those islands where, if the Optimists speak the greater truth, the moon shines all day and the sun shines all night, and the ocean and the sky are eternally cerulean, and the shimmering fishes leap as easily in the air as in the water, and the shore is like the green and the sheen of a Chinese mandarin's sleeve, and every individual man, woman, and child goes forth to his work with an alto song on his lips—which isn't at all like Boston, even the last week of April.

And the Boy's father, it seemed, was an English clergyman there, and his mother was an English invalid, and they were both rather old parents, it seemed, to have such a silly young son. And the Boy had a Voice, and some foolish person had talked Grand Opera to him, and against all the advice and wishes of his people he had come away to try his fortunes, and the opera had proved to be comic opera, and only chorus work at that, and in the distasteful buffoonery and palpable indignities of a "chorus man's" clownish career the Boy's hot young Southern pride had received a rather dangerous kind of shock. Worse than a shattered pride, his health and his principles had both evidently been jarred quite a bit, and his finances in all certainty had been completely wrecked. Twice, apparently, with much personal sacrifice, his father and mother had renewed the finances. Now in all positiveness he did not expect any further reprieves of any sort.

"But—oh—goodness me!" I exclaimed, as superficially as I could. "Wouldn't you almost rather fail in Boston than succeed anywhere else? Wouldn't you really rather have had one grim winter in Boston than any amount of sappy summers in that primitive little island of yours 'way off at the ends of the earth?"

The Boy bridled instantly. "My island isn't at all 'way off at the ends of the earth!" he corrected me with passion. "Why, it's almost—suburban to Boston!—Why, the steamers from right down here at your own wharves run regularly to it every Tuesday and Saturday!"

"Oh, you don't mean they run—even Saturdays—when everybody here is so busy?" I mocked him teasingly.

Then suddenly my heart gave a lurch—one of those great big, bright red lurches, and I jumped right up and began to wrap the tissue-paper furiously around the Scarlet Geranium Hat again.

"Will you wait right here for me till I get back?" I cried out.

"Why, y-e-s," said the Boy dully. "What for?"

"Will you promise to wait?" I persisted.

The Boy nodded.

"Do you always keep your promises?" I demanded.

The Boy grinned. "Not—always," he confessed.

The impudence of him maddened me. "If you're not here when I come back I'll —kill you!" I affirmed pleasantly.

Then I turned and ran down the soft, narrow pathway to the broad brick sidewalk, and on and on and on through the crowds and over the street-crossings till I reached the milliner's shop.

"I've come to return the Scarlet Geranium Hat," I cried out, all puffy for breath.

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"What's the matter with it?" said the chief milliner haughtily.

"It's too—large!" I suggested.

"But you wanted it large," said the milliner.

"It's too red!" I protested.

"But you wanted it red," said the milliner.

"It's too expensive!" I complained.

"But you wanted it expensive," said the milliner.

"You misunderstand me entirely," I contended. "The only thing about this Hat that I want is—my money back!"

"But you can't have your money back," said the milliner.

"If—you—don't—give me my money back," I threatened, "no girl in my Art School will ever—buy a hat of you again! Nor the daughter of an Art School girl! Nor the granddaughter! Nor the great-granddaughter! Nor *anybody!* Till you're designing bomb-proof bonnets for the Judgment Day!"

With palpable suspicion the milliner focused her entire attention on the right shoulder-seam of my blue broadcloth suit, which I must confess was showing up just a little bit shiny.

"What Art School is it?" said the milliner cautiously. "Not the Vesta E. Dudley Art School that that stingy old man Dudley left his granddaughter instead of a fortune?" An expression of some unctuousness spread broadly around the milliner's facile mouth. "That's the only Art School in Boston that does any special business with—us," said the milliner smugly.

"Yes, I mean that very same school," I confided with some pertness.

"And who are you?" snapped the milliner.

"I'm 'Vesta E. Dudley,'" I said. "And though I may be short of pocket-money now and then, I'm—never—short—of—Art School!"

"O-u-c-h!" said the milliner.

The fifty-dollar bill that she handed me from the cash drawer was rather a dirty bill and distinctly torn at one corner, but it seemed to me suddenly the biggest, buyiest money that I had ever touched in my life. Like dragging a little child along so vehemently that its feet never touch the street, I took that fifty-dollar bill by one dingy ear and led it all fluttering down Washington Street to the steamship ticket office.

Did you ever try to get a steamship ticket in a hurry? Well, don't! There's entirely too much detail to it—outer staterooms, inner staterooms, upper berths, lower berths!

Why, they even want to know what a passenger's name is!

"His name's 'Albert,' I said.

"But 'Albert' *what?*" they persisted.

"Why, just—'Albert'," I argued. The clerk was really very cross about it. "*He's got to have a last name!*" snapped the clerk. "I tell you he can't go on this boat unless he's got a last name!"

"Very well then," I conceded coldly, "his last name is 'Albert' too." So as "Albert Albert" I saw the clerk enter the Shabby Boy's name on the passenger list; and the expression on the clerk's face all the time was so excessively hateful that even when I had reached the great, joyous, shopper-crowded street again I didn't feel quite comfortable about it, but went back once more to the wrought-iron cage where the clerk was adding up the longest column of figures I ever saw. All chock-full of messy numbers like eights and nines and twelves that are so hard to add even if you're not interrupted, the cross clerk lifted his frowning eyes to mine.

"Excuse me," I said, "but while we're being accurate let's be perfectly accurate. The boy's middle name is Albert—too!"

Then I got a taxi-cab and started back for the Public Garden.

The Shabby Boy was sitting just exactly where I had left him on the bench under the budding linden-tree; but his being there, I imagine, was due rather to the weakness of his knees than to any particularly strong sense of honor regarding promises.

"Here's your—steamer ticket—home—and a bit of small change!" I announced, perfectly blithely. "The boat's late sailing to-night—something cranky about the cargo—I telephoned and found out—so if we hurry like mad—you can make it—all right!"

All along the Shabby Boy's cheek-bones the red blood began to flush a bit ominously, and when he lifted his startled eyes to mine I thought that I had never in all my life seen anything so ugly as astonishment and hurt pride and hunger all snarled up absolutely tight in the same face.

"But I should think you'd—like to go home!" I argued quickly. "Why, I should

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think you'd be perfectly crazy to go home—to your Daddy—and your Mammy—and your moonlight—and your onions—and your oranges—and your asphalt—and your sugar-cane—or whatever it is that you raise on your funny little tropical island. The tarpon must be biting just about now—aren't they?—And—to—your—Mammy," I resumed monotonously.

For just an instant the Boy's drooping shoulders vitalized perceptibly—and then collapsed again.

"Of course you know," I said, "you could take your steamer ticket and everything just as a *loan.*"

"Take it 'just as a loan'?" repeated the Shabby Boy with a bit of a gasp.

"Why, yes, of course," I said; "just a small friendly loan between two—Artists." The clock on the church spire was beginning to make me feel pretty nervous.

"O-h," said the Shabby Boy meditatively. "O-h." Again his shoulders quickened, and again he collapsed—this time with his thin hands thrust out plaintively in an entirely new gesture of despair. "But—I haven't—got any—security—to give you," he whispered huskily. Then suddenly his blurred eyes lit upon the brown leather bag, and he straightened up like a shot. "Would you take the—monkey—for security?" he stammered.

Up to this time I had seen the face of Duty only in profile, and the piquancy of the outline had filled me with vivacity and rapture; but from this moment on, Duty turned and eyed me squarely, and the full-face of Duty, I noted, was as plain as the face of the monkey.

I'D RATHER NOT SAY MUCH OF ANYTHING ABOUT THAT WALK HOME.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" I sputtered. "I'm perfectly—crazy—about monkeys!—It's the one thing in the world I've ever wanted! It's the— It's the——"

Then we jumped up like two kiddies and ran for the taxi-cab and dashed off like four-wheeled, rubber-tired mad for the dingy, tar-smelling wharves where the chuggy little Southern steamer was beginning already to whine and snarl at its anchor ropes, and a lot of dark blue, brass-buttoned men dragged the Shabby Boy just in time across the shifting gang-plank. And before I actually had a chance to realize that much of anything had happened, I found myself standing all alone on the humpy edge of the breeze-blown pier with my left arm sagging down to the weight of the brown leather bag and my right arm waving high in the air to a huddled-up, white-faced, grinny-mouthed figure in the stern of the boat.

Then I walked home. It was three miles. But somehow I hadn't felt exactly like asking the Shabby Boy for a carfare out of the money that stood for the Scarlet Geranium Hat.

In your warm winter broadcloth suit and your warm winter velvet hat, did you ever walk home three miles through a hot, dawdling, unseasonal, late-April late-afternoon?—And carry a monkey?—Not a perfectly good monkey, either, but a revolving monkey? A monkey that whirled round and round and round and round? And jabbered? And scratched? And in a funny-looking brown leather bag that alone was enough to make every single, solitary person you met turn about and—stare at you?

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Personally, I think I'd rather not say much of anything more about that walk home. And if I don't want to remember it, there's no particular object in burdening your mind with it, is there?

Anyway, it was just a quarter of seven when I reached the boarding-house. And my white linen collar and my black silk ankles were like pulp.

The very first instant I put my key in the front door, I felt perfectly positive that Hortense and Jane were hanging over the banisters, three flights up, watching for me.

Something that felt very much like heart-failure made me sit down a bit suddenly on the first stair to rest.

"Vesta?—V-e-s-t-a?—Is that you?" called Hortense.

"Vesta?—V-e-s-t-a?—Is t h a t y o u ?" echoed Jane.

Both voices were strained and edgy with the unmistakable strain, the unmistakable edginess, of people whose original enthusiasm about you has been palpably blunted by the fact of your being late.—Nobody in the world is ever as cross to you as the person who has been worrying about you!

Certainly I did not sit down again to rest until I had reached the middle of the second flight of stairs. Hortense and Jane could see me quite plainly now, and, as though somewhat relaxed and appeased by the sight, they began abruptly to jump up and down and pat each other on the back.

Laboriously I picked up the brown leather bag and resumed my climb.

The moment my foot touched the bare upper floor, Hortense and Jane swooped down upon me with one mighty grab and fairly dragged me off into the bedroom.

As though with one voice, "*What did you do with the Scarlet Geranium Hat?*" they cried out in great, giggling excitement.

Limply I sank into the Morris chair and poked my toe against the brown leather bag. "I traded it for a—monkey," I answered dully.

With a sickening little gasp of incredulity, Hortense knelt down on the floor and opened the brown leather bag—and screamed—and slammed the bag together again. Like the most monotonous sort of automaton, Jane also plunged down on the floor—and screamed and—slammed the bag together again. Hortense's scream was bad enough, but Jane's scream was something awful! Then Hortense went over and perched herself altogether stiffly on the edge of her trunk, and Jane with considerable effort braced her limp form as well as she could against the foot-board of the bed.

When the questions were all questioned and the answers all answered, Hortense's face was as white as a sheet, and Jane's soft hair all along the edge of her forehead was curled up perfectly tight in little damp, cross, fretty ringlets. Anybody could have seen at a glance that both girls were simply furious with me, and that neither one would very soon forgive me for that day's bungling work.

Then, partly because we were all very nervous and very restless, but mostly because Jane and Hortense had been too much worried about me to remember to save any supper for me, we got some olives and crackers and went up on the roof to a small, messy, pebble-covered square of surface where, if we sat rather closely huddled together, we could rest quite safely and look down very satisfactorily across myriad gray slate house-tops into big blue Boston Harbor itself.

Usually it was rather a flushed, busy, noisy kind of a view, a view of traffic and mart and smoke-tortured skies; but tonight, like some celestial, man-muffling sort of packing laid between Earth and Heaven, the snow-white clouds banked high on the horizon, and under a perfectly calm, cool, silver-colored sky even the overworked, winter-driven chimneys seemed to have found their clean spring peace at last. Certainly there was no mischief in the spring that night—just Peace, gray, gray, silver-gray Peace—a strange, uncanny, atmospherically distorted Sense of Peace—a preternatural smile along the far edge of the Harbor—a little happy sigh across the tree-tops. To ear, to eye, to every startled sense, the whole round, rackety world lay suddenly hushed and flat before us like a painted canvas.

Something inside my spine began to crinkle a little.

"Goodness!" I laughed hysterically. "It—looks exactly like a picture that Faustina might have painted—if Faustina—" again I laughed hysterically "—if Faustina had ever guessed what Peace looked like!"

"Hush!" hissed Jane with unexpected severity. But I vow I felt her shoulder shiver a tiny bit against mine.

"Nonsense!" snapped Hortense. But I

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swear I saw the goose-flesh rise across the fine, smooth surface of her arm.

Reaching out impulsively, I gathered Jane and Hortense non-resistingly toward me. "I don't care whether you hate me or not," I said. "It's—nice—to—be—together."

"Oh, I don't—hate you at all," snuffled Jane. "It's only that—" Astonishingly her small fist shot out and shook itself threateningly toward the Harbor, where an infinitesimally small and impossible-looking toy-boat went chugging valiantly forth into the great, mysterious unknown. "Oh, darn that boy who took our—Hat!" she finished passionately.

"It wasn't a—boy—who took the Hat," corrected Hortense with distinct tartness. "Oh, it wasn't a boy who took our Hat. It was a—monkey!—Of course, I'm devoted to monkeys—but, considering all the things we had to deny ourselves, fifty dollars does seem to me—rather a large price to pay—for a Hat for a—monkey."

Even though I felt exactly like the fool that Jane and Hortense accused me of being, something defiant flared in my heart for an instant.

"I didn't give the Hat to a—boy!" I cried. "And I didn't give it to a—monkey!—I gave it to a *mother*—to a little, old, white-haired, pale-faced, worried, darling *mother*—and fifty dollars, I tell you, is not one single cent too much to pay for a—*mother's* Hat!—And though this mother—never sees the Hat—and never even knows that it ever existed, I'll wager you anything you care to name that it will be the most becoming thing that ever happened to her in all her life!—Any old cheap red concoction of straw and stupidity could have put color into the face of the sort of young girl *you* were looking for; but I tell you it needs something pretty extra and expensive—and magical—to reflect red a whole thousand miles away on a—sick mother's cheeks!—So there!"

"How emotional—you are!" drawled Hortense.

"Maybe—Faustina is pleased with me," I persisted drearily.

Hortense laughed. "It would take quite a sign from Heaven to prove it," she scoffed.

For some inexplainable reason I felt my hair begin to bristle along the nape of my neck.

Then suddenly both Jane and Hortense clutched out at me with a clutch that bruised me black and blue.

"My God!" they gasped, as though with one breath. "Look quick!—The Sunset!—Faustina!—The Hat!"

And there at the far, mystic fusing line of Earth and Sky—miraculously exaggerated, miraculously transfigured—like a purely personal signal-fire flashed out from the very gates of Heaven, a scarlet, crown-shaped sun on a brim of molten gold blazed forth its amazing Beatification!

THE INFINITE

BY ROY FOLLETT

BEYOND the open window, in the gloaming,
A curving reach of sand that lines the bay;
Beyond the sand, where wild sea-birds are homing,
The breakers' thundering roar, the reef-tossed spray.
Beyond the breakers, where no eye can measure,
A rainbow and its dangled pot of gold;
Beyond the rainbow and its faëry treasure,
The Happy Isles are gleaming as of old.
Beyond the rainbow, as the darkness closes,
One tiny, twinkling star shines bravely down—
A gem that in the night's black hair reposes,
Above the filmy sable of her gown.
Beyond the star, beyond the night—ah me!
What would the longing heart not give to see?

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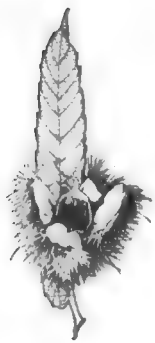
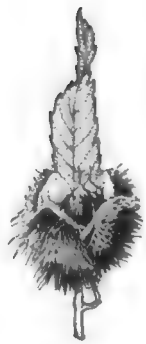


The CHANGING WOODS



BY

E·J·RATH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. N. MARCHAND

THE man frowned and winced as he shifted his body and turned to face the sound. The crashing in the brush puzzled him, because in that country people followed the way of the water and traveled by canoe. Yet he knew the footsteps to be human; no deer was likely to seek the lake at midday. His lips framed a call, but he hesitated; to call meant the pain again. Besides, the footsteps were nearer now; he would know in a minute.

"Nearly two days," he muttered, as his eye roved for an instant over his scattered duffel and the canoe half drawn from the water, a few yards away. Then he uttered a stifled gasp of surprise.

It was a girl! She broke into the open fifty feet from where he lay, stared at the lake for a few seconds, and sank sobbing to the ground. Lloyd watched her in amazement. She wore a short skirt that seemed to be in shreds; her gray flannel shirt had a great rent in one sleeve; she was hatless, and her hair hung in disorder to her waist. The man glanced at her hobnailed, high-laced boots and read a story of bitter travel through the forest.

Once she lifted her head from her hands and stared again dully at the shining water before her, then hid her face while her shoulders shook in an uncontrollable convulsion. For a minute more he watched her, then called softly:

"Don't cry. It's all right."

She struggled to her feet with a shriek.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "I'm right over here."

She saw him then, and stood very still, gazing at him, as if in unbelief.

"You'll have to come over here," he went on. "I can't get up just now."

She approached slowly, half afraid, and looked down on him. Then she dropped to her knees at his side and burst into a fresh storm of tears. He reached out with an effort and took one of her hands. It was cruelly scratched and had been bleeding.

"I guess you were lost," said Lloyd gently. "But you're found now, so the worry is all over. Hungry, I guess. There's some pilot bread in the top of that nearest sack. Get it—and will you give me a bit of it, too?"

Without a word she obeyed him, then sat and ate with the pathetic hunger of a half-starved animal. He nibbled slowly at the bread, while he studied her face.

When she had finished two of the big crackers, he told her where to find the cup and sent her down to the edge of the lake to drink. She came back and sat near him, her dark eyes watching him with wonder.

"No fun being lost," he began. "I was lost once myself. It makes you hungry, and usually the sleeping's bad. How long since you left your party?"

"Yesterday morning." They were the first words she had spoken, and they were uttered in a whisper.

His eyes showed pity. "All night in the woods—alone," he said softly. "Poor little kid! Where's your camp?"

"Round Island Lake."

"How in the world—" Lloyd exclaimed. "Why, child, that's eight or nine miles, straight through the bush and over a height of land! Tell me how it happened."

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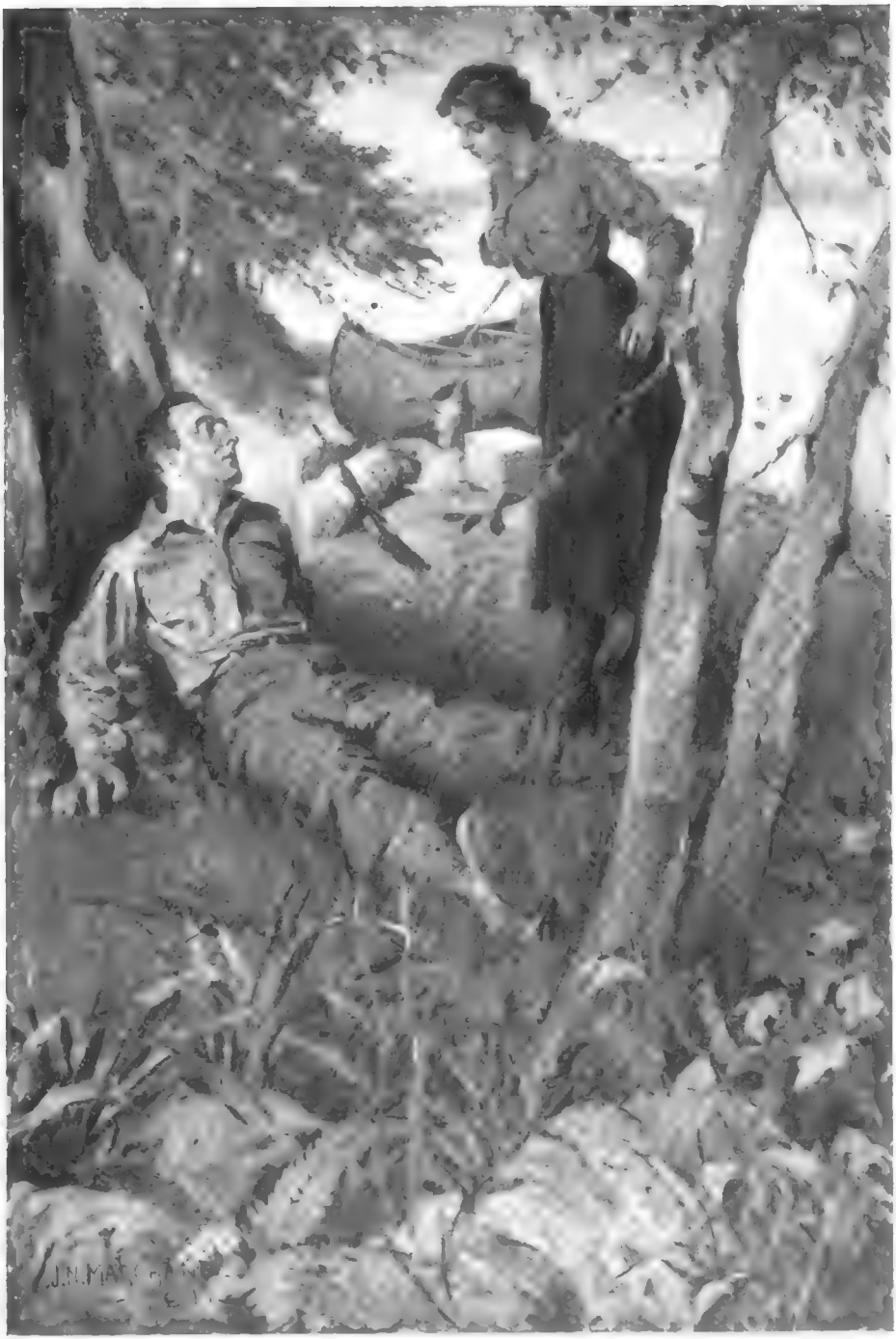

SHE APPROACHED SLOWLY, HALF AFRAID, AND LOOKED DOWN ON HIM.

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"I was paddling," she answered, slowly. "I took a canoe out before breakfast to go down the lake a way. I went pretty far, I guess. Then I went ashore; I wanted to get some red leaves from a maple. But I didn't fasten the canoe securely, and when I got back it had drifted out in the lake. I didn't dare swim for it; it was too far, and the wind was carrying it. Then it went around a point and I didn't see it again. I waited—ever so long—but nobody came. Then I started to walk; to follow the shore."

"I understand," he nodded.

"I came to where a stream emptied into the lake and I had to walk back into the woods, to look for a place to cross. The stream branched, and finally I got over on a log. Then I came to the other branch and I got confused. I couldn't find the lake again."

"You should have followed the current," he commented.

"I know it now. But I was nervous then. I tried what I thought was a short cut back to the lake. And then—then I was lost. I walked and walked, but I couldn't seem to find anything. Sometimes I rested a little bit, but I was too frightened to sit still long. I shouted, too; but after it began to get dark I was afraid to shout. The walking was very rough. You can see—" and she ran her hands over her tattered skirt. "When it got dark I didn't dare walk any more; it was so still. I slept after a while. Twice I woke while it was still dark; it was horrible! The next time it was broad daylight, and then I began to walk again. Oh, how I have walked—and called!"

The tears started to her eyes again, and she said in a stifled voice: "Oh, the woods are horrible! Horrible!"

"Poor kid!" he said gently. "But never mind now. You're found. Can you cook a bit? We'll have a square meal, if you can."

"I'm a coward," she said weakly. "But I can't help it." She brushed the tears from her eyes and tried to smile. Then she bent forward suddenly and searched his face with a quick glance. It was drawn and haggard, she noticed for the first time, and he lay half propped against a tree. Lloyd smiled back at her.

"Are you sick?" she asked, in an awed tone.

He tapped his leg and nodded. "Broken," he said.

"Oh!" she gasped. "And you're alone?"

Lloyd nodded again, and forced another smile to his lips. Impulsively she placed a hand on his forehead.

"That part of it's better now," he reassured her. "The fever was pretty strong yesterday, but it's gone down a lot."

"When—when did it happen?"

"Day before yesterday."

"And you've been here?" she said, in slow amazement—"alone! Oh, you poor thing!" She hid her face again.

"There, there!" he said, comfortingly, "Don't worry about my troubles. You're found, and so am I. That's a beginning. You need me and I need you. Everything will be all right. Cheer up, little sister."

In a moment she looked up and smiled at him with trembling lips.

"I'll stop being a coward now. I'm selfish. I was just lost and hungry. But you—for two days! Tell me what to do. Where can I get somebody? I'll go now."

"You mustn't go just now," he answered. "There are things to do first. We've got to get organized. Both of us ought to eat. I guess you can cook some."

"I can cook some things," she said doubtfully. "But your leg—are you suffering?"

"Not just now. It's waited for two days and it can wait till I eat. After that I'll see what we can do about it. Are you rested enough to work a bit?"

"I'm ready," she said, rising. "Tell me what to do."

"I'd like a little whisky," he began. "Just dump out that small sack. There's a flask in there with my clothes—that's it. You take some first. You need it as much as I."

But she would not drink until Lloyd had put the flask to his lips.

"Now if you'll get me a drink of water," he said. She found one of his tin pails, filled it to the brim, and brought it to him. He drank long and slowly.

"Gee, but that's good!" he said, smiling. "That's the first since yesterday." He caught a look of pain and pity in her eyes and added hastily: "Now we need a fire. That's a good enough place, right where the ax is lying. You won't need to chop any wood; there are plenty of dead sticks."

She laid a fire under his direction, Lloyd smiling faintly once or twice at her unfamiliarity with the art. Then he told her where to find the matches, and she uttered a little cry of satisfaction when the dry wood blazed up briskly.

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"Now, if you'll take that ax," said Lloyd, "and cut a couple of sticks with forks at one end, I'll show you how to boil the kettle."

"YOU'RE PRETTY HANDY," HE COMMENTED, APPROVINGLY. "YOU OUGHT TO LIKE THE WOODS."

"I know what you mean," she said. "I've seen the guides."

"Next there's the grub sack," he went on, when a pail of water had been swung over the blaze. "Over there under the dog-tent. I hadn't got the tent up when it happened, you see. It was just a few minutes after I came ashore to make camp. And, by the way, may I have my pipe? It's in the canoe, I think. I have the pouch. Thank you—and the matches. Now I'm fixed. As I was saying, I was just unloading the stuff. I slipped with the heavy sack and went down with it. That stone there did the business—that and the sack. But let's

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talk about dinner. The pea soup would do us both good. It's in that oiled paper tube; that's it—the powder."

He watched her as she worked under his directions. "You're pretty handy," he commented, approvingly. "You ought to like the woods."

"Do you?" she said, stopping in her work and looking her astonishment. "After this?"

"Sure! The woods are not to blame for this. I don't hold them any grudge. I'll be back just the same next year. So'll you. You don't think so now, but you will. I can tell. You're going to make friends with the woods before you're out of here."

She laughed doubtfully and began stirring the soup.

"Don't be in such a feverish hurry," Lloyd admonished. "Hurrying seldom gets you anywhere in camp. Use this knife for the bacon." He tossed his clasp-knife toward her. "And you'll have to take tea, or drink plain water. I don't pack coffee."

She found the tin plates and cups and brought the dinner over to where he lay. She got the rolled tent and propped him a little higher. He gritted his teeth as he moved his body and smothered a groan. Then they ate in silence, studying each other with furtive glances. She could not be much over twenty, Lloyd decided, and she freshened amazingly with the rest and food.

"I can't yet see how you managed, all alone," she said, when they had finished.

"I didn't manage much," he answered. "When it first happened, I crawled up here. I imagine I fainted for a while, because when I came to it was dark. The first night was worse than last, but I slept some. Yesterday morning I had to get a drink, so I pulled myself down there again. Then I let my leg soak for a while; that helped the inflammation. I crawled back in the afternoon, and then I had it out with the fever. I've got a medicine-kit over there, but it hurt too much to move, and I didn't bother. I wasn't hungry, luckily; there was too much pain. Just before you found me to-day I was figuring on going after another drink."

"And now what shall I do?" she said as he paused.

"Wash dishes; that's always the first thing. Then fill the biggest pail with fresh water."

Lloyd lay back with half-closed eyes, watching her as she moved swiftly about the camp. Now and then a motion of her arm disclosed a long and angry scratch through the rent in her sleeve. "Poor kid!" he murmured. "She sure did have a time. But I wonder what she can do for us?"

"Do you think you could help a bit with this leg?" he asked, when she came back.

"I'll try—I mean I will," she answered.

"Good! I don't know just what can be done, but I want to have a look at it, anyhow."

She unlaced his heavy boot with careful fingers and drew it off. Then she removed the thick gray lumberman's stocking.

"Take the knife and cut the trousers away at the knee," he directed; and when she had finished he bent forward and inspected the injured leg.

"It's below the knee, you see," he explained. "Both bones, I should judge. The swelling has gone down considerably. It looks fairly straight to me, too. But I think a little twisting will make it straighter. I'm glad I kept that boot on; it helped hold it in place. Do you mind helping now?"

She compressed her lips and shook her head.

"Take the ankle, then, and turn it slowly to the right, while I hold at the knee. Don't be afraid; it won't hurt much."

It was torture, but the pain belonged to him and he would not let her know.

"Pull—gently," he commanded, his face white with agony. "There; that's better. I think." He fell back against the duffel bag and closed his eyes.

"A little more of that whisky," he said weakly. She brought it to him and put the flask to his lips. Presently he opened his eyes and smiled at her; hers were filled with tears.

"That's all right, kid," he reassured her. "I think we've done a pretty neat job. Now if you'll take the knife and strip that birch over there, I'll show you what to do next."

They fashioned some bark splints, one long one, to reach from foot to hip. This they drew carefully under the helpless leg, so that it lay straight in the hollow of the bark. Then she tore bandages from a blanket.

"We'll keep it soaked with water for a while," he said. But the pain had come again keenly with the movement of the leg, and he could hardly master it.

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"Get me the medicine-kit, will you?" he asked. He fumbled in the bag and drew out a little leather case. "Hypodermic," he explained. "I've carried it in the woods for the last five or six years and never needed it till now. I've got to dope this pain for a little while, I'm afraid."

Under his instructions she took a little pellet from one of the tiny vials and dissolved it in a spoonful of water warmed over the embers of the fire. He showed her how to fill the syringe.

"Now go ahead and jab," he commanded. "I won't feel it at all. I'll probably get drowsy pretty soon," he added, with a nod of thanks. "Don't let that worry you. I need some sleep, anyhow."

The tree shadows lay in long parallel rows when Lloyd opened his eyes stupidly and looked up into the girl's face. She was sitting at his side, and he felt a cool hand on his forehead.

"Lie still," she bade him. "I've been keeping the bandages wet."

"How long have I slept?"

"Three or four hours. Does it pain now?"

"I hardly notice it. I'm a lot of bother to you, I'm afraid. It must have been stupid, sitting there."

She shook her head. "I've been watching the woods and the lake," she answered.

"And don't the woods look better than they did yesterday?"

The girl nodded and smiled. "I think it's because I've had a lesson in being brave," she said. "I'm suffering from self-contempt now."

He watched her for a minute or so, while she gazed out across the water. "Let's have supper," he suggested. "And please smile."

She turned and laughed, half ashamed, and began to gather sticks for the fire.

"I forgot," he said, presently. "You'd best set the tent up first. Right here'll do" —and he indicated a spot beside where he lay. It was a simple little affair—she marveled at the compactness of it. Tents in the camp where she came from were like great rooms, with board floors. Supper was almost gay, and Lloyd nearly managed to forget the dull ache in his leg. She kept the fire going as the evening closed in, dragging a good-sized log over to it, and feeding it into the flames as fast as they consumed it.

"That's a lazy man's fire, but it'll do," he commented.

As the cool of the Canadian night came on, he bade her put on his sweater, and let her draw a blanket about his shoulders.

"What's your name?" he asked, suddenly. "Mine's Bill."

"Margaret."

He seemed to consider this for a while, smoking in silence. Then: "Margaret, I suppose you understand there's no getting out of here to-night?"

"Yes," she answered. "But I've stopped being afraid."

"It's a good twenty miles to the nearest place," he added.

"As far as that?" Her eyes showed surprise.

"For purposes of travel, yes. You'll find a map in my coat. If you'll get it and poke up the fire a bit, I'll show you."

She brought the map and they spread it out together.

"Now, here's us," he said, laying a finger on a little point of land that thrust its way into a body of water. "This is Tramp Lake. Just below it is Little Tramp. That's the way I came through. Your lake, Round Island, is here—" and he showed her, while she nodded. "Your lake belongs to a different system entirely. It can be reached over this route, but you've got to go away above here to do it, and then there are three portages—hard ones, too. This is the way you came." He drew his finger across a strip of land.

"But you've got to go out the way I came in. Can you paddle much?"

"I'm pretty strong," she answered.

"Here's your course, then. Afterward I'll write it out for you, so you can't possibly lose it. You follow this shore until you reach this little river. That's about three miles. The river takes you straight into Little Tramp Lake; there's two miles of it. You'll find a beaver dam about half-way down, but you can push over it without trouble. The current is with you. When you get to Little Tramp, you must take a straight course across it—south. I'll mark it—so. You'll have my compass, anyhow. It's a mile across and an easy paddle if the wind isn't against you. If it is, you'll have to plug some. Now on the other side of the lake you hit a portage. You can't miss it; there are two big logs in the water and you can see the path. Did you ever carry a canoe?"

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"LET'S GET ON WITH THE MAP. YOU'RE MY COURIER NOW, AND, TO PUT IT SELFISHLY, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE FOR ME, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON."

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She shook her head.

"Never mind; you'll have to drag it. My canoe doesn't weigh more than fifty pounds; it's new. Luckily the portage isn't over two hundred yards, and it's not bad going—almost level. That'll be the hardest part you'll have."

"I'll get over it," she said. "But how about you?"

"Why, I'm not going, you know," answered Lloyd. "I thought you understood. At least, I'm not going this trip."

She looked dismayed, and he hastened to explain. "You won't mind it a bit. There won't be the least danger of getting lost. It's a straight road."

"I didn't mean that," she broke in. "I was thinking of leaving you."

"Listen, Margaret; you've got to get out of here. To put it selfishly, you've got to do it for me, if for no other reason. You're my courier now. Let's get on with the map. When you get over this portage, you're on West Deer River and you go down with the stream. Remember, all the time you are working nearly due south. About four miles down the river there's a rapid; you must drag around that, about a hundred yards. Don't try to run it—the water is too low. The take-out for the portage is on your right. You can't fail to see it; a big rock near the shore marks it. Below the rapid you follow the river for another four miles. That lands you in Gray Trout Lake. Now, here's your course by the map."

He drew a pencil line close to the eastern shore.

"You can't get wind-bound here; there's not enough open water. You go down Gray Trout three miles and then you're at the mouth of a creek. There are a lot of rushes around the entrance. Follow this creek three or four miles more and you're at Joe Station. That's a sort of headquarters for guides; it's two miles from the railroad. When you get to the station, ask for Jim McLean. Don't expect to find a Scotchman; he's a half-breed Indian. If he's out, get anybody else. There's pretty sure to be somebody there. They'll have to send two men. Tell them where I am, and any of the guides can find me. If they know of a doctor camped anywhere in the neighborhood, tell them to send for him and have him at Joe Station when I come out.

"At Joe Station there's a telephone, and you can get word to your party at Round Island. Then somebody can drive you out to the railroad, and you can get back to your camp. Will you be ready to start early to-morrow? I'm figuring you to make it by sundown easily."

She sat silently studying the map when he had finished speaking, and then made him go over the directions again, while she penciled them along the margin. He showed her how to use the compass, how to set the map on the thwart in front of her, how to fix a landmark on the shore ahead when she had laid her course, and keep the canoe pointed steadily toward it.

"It's the only way, isn't it?" she commented. "I see now."

"You'll enjoy the trip," said Lloyd. "Honestly. You'll feel so free and independent and self-reliant. There's nothing like it."

And he fell to talking of the woods and the summers he had spent paddling through the still places of the forest. The girl presently divined his purpose and now and then she smiled, faintly and seriously. He was putting heart in her; explaining by simple stories the ease and safety of travel in the wilderness; giving her some of his own faith and courage. The littleness of her own view faded, and as he talked she began to sense something that even a summer in camp had been unable to make her feel.

"You love the woods, don't you?" she ventured.

"I suppose I do; I guess it must be that. Somehow, I drift back every summer. I've been doing it ever since I was a kid."

"And do you come like this—alone?

"Oh, no; only once before. I planned this trip with my side partner, but, as I said, he was called home. So I came ahead. I've just been loafing along. I was out three days when this happened. I was expecting to follow this chain up to White River, and then loop back by way of the Sister Lakes. You never got over there, I guess? You must, some time; they're wonderful."

"You said you were lost once; tell me about it," she said.

The firelight warmed his pale features as Lloyd plunged into a story of boyhood foolishness. He tried to make it funny, but her hand stole unconsciously into his as the simple, vivid tale went on, and at its close her fingers were gripping his tightly.

"It's imagination that bothers us," he

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was saying. "We don't train it to help us; we imagine the wrong things. I was bothered with it yesterday and the day before, although I knew it was foolish."

"But suppose I hadn't come?" she said, softly, staring into the flames.

"Well, of course I figured some on that. But somebody was pretty sure to be coming through, although it's getting late for campers. Probably a ranger or a guide would have found me sooner or later. I'm pretty well fixed for grub. I'd have got out myself if it hadn't been for those two portages. I knew a guide who paddled over fifty miles after his leg was broken, and shot three rapids in the bargain. But they'd have been looking for me in a couple of weeks, anyhow. My clothes are at Joe Station, and I had to go out that way."

He smoked a while in silence, and then added, as if his thought had been uninterrupted: "But I'm mighty glad you came, kid."

"You found me," she said simply. "I should have died."

"Well, you were badly fixed," he answered, thoughtfully. "You had no outfit at all, no grub."

"It wasn't altogether that. I'm so incapable."

"You'll forget that word to-morrow," said Lloyd. "And that reminds me that you need sleep—a good sleep. Crawl into the tent, for I shall get you out early, I promise you."

The girl demurred, but Lloyd shook his head.

"The tent for you," he said. "I'll be right here alongside of it. Besides, I don't want to move unless I have to. I'll be plenty warm. You're dog-tired, Margaret. Turn in."

She brought fresh water to him, wet the bandages, and made him promise to summon her if he needed anything. A few minutes she called softly from the tent:

"Billy!"

"Yes?"

"I'm going to learn to be brave in the woods."

"Good night, little girl," he answered. "And thank you."

"Good night, Billy."

He slept after a while, and the fire died down to glowing coals. It was daylight when Lloyd glanced at his watch. He hated to wake her, but she had much ahead of her before sundown, and time counted. Three times he called before she answered.

"Did you sleep at all?" she asked anxiously, kneeling at his side and touching his forehead softly to see if the fever had left him.

"Actually, I slept well," he answered. "And I know you did."

She laughed and ran briskly down to the lake, filling the big pail and bringing fresh water to him. Then, without a word, she gathered sticks and leaves, started a fire, and began to get breakfast. His eyes watched her approvingly.

"You'll be a guide some day," he laughed. "You're picking up fast."

That pleased her—she smiled brightly at him as she looked up from her task. "The city isn't everything," she answered. "I used to think so."

"Well, you see you've been caught young enough. You're saved," he said.

But they fell silent during the meal, as if each read the other's thoughts. Lloyd hated to send the girl, but there was no other way; it seemed brutal to leave a helpless man, yet she knew that he was right.

He made her repeat her directions, and she went over them without a slip. Then he had her prepare two meals for herself, to be taken in the canoe. She filled the water pails and set them beside him, gave him new bandages for his leg, and then, at his direction, dragged all of the camp belongings within his reach. When there was nothing more to do, she still lingered.

"Time to start, Margaret," he admonished. "Now, listen: don't paddle too hard. Take it easy, because you've got quite a road. Keep your eye on the map; remember that you're moving south all the time. Don't get rattled. It's a straight course, but if you should get puzzled at any time, stop right where you are and think it over slowly. You'll be at Joe Station before dark; don't fret about that."

"It isn't about me I'm fretting," she said slowly. "It's you."

"Oh, I'm fine," he said, smiling. "Why, Jim McLean is likely to find me turning handsprings when he gets here. The men'll come through to-night. They won't lose any time. And if you're lucky about trains, you'll be back in your own camp to-night. Now go, sister."

She held both his hands for a minute and tried to force back the tears that threatened.

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"I won't be afraid, Billy," she said. "I'll get through before dark. And I'll remember you saved me—always, and that you taught me something. Good-by."

"Good-by, Margaret."

He watched her wistfully as she pushed the canoe into the water.

"Take both paddles," he called. "And put a stone in the bow. Otherwise she'll be too high in the head, and the breeze will spin you around like a top. Got everything now? Compass? Map? Lunch?"

She took a last look around and nodded. Then, as she leaned over to push off, she hesitated, turned, and walked back to where he lay. Without a word she dropped to her knees, bent forward, and kissed him on the lips. Then she left him.

"Good luck!" he called, when the canoe was a hundred yards off. She turned and waved her paddle, and said something he could not catch. A moment later the canoe was lost to sight around a wooded point, moving swiftly under her steady strokes.

Lloyd lay alone with his pain. Once or twice he ate a little, but his appetite seemed to have deserted him again. It was a friendly day, yet the woods seemed strangely lonely. That was a new sensation to him, and he futilely tried to analyze it. Part of the day he worried about her, although he knew that was childish. It wasn't a hard trip, yet she was such a pathetic tenderfoot. Game, though, he admitted—after she began to understand about things. "Poor kid!" he said aloud, as he thought of her night alone in the forest.

When the sun had passed the ridge opposite his camp and begun to sink among the pines, he wondered if she was at Joe Station. Darkness came slowly, and Lloyd watched the stars appear. Now she must be on her way to the railroad, he thought, and the men were coming for him. She would probably be in her own camp by midnight.

And then in a flash he realized that he did not even know who she was! Just Margaret! Just a chance comrade of the woods, stopping for a while by his camp-fire and then journeying onward. A farewell wave of the paddle and she had gone. He understood at last why the woods were lonesome.

Well, he would stay awake until the men came, anyhow. He smoked steadily, watching the coal in his pipe glow and fade. There was no fire to-night. Finally he became drowsy. At last he slept.

A light flashed in his eyes roused him with a start.

"It's Jack Burns," called a familiar voice. "Are y'all right?"

"God bless her! She got there!" exclaimed Lloyd. Then he fell back with a groan, for he had forgotten the leg.

"Got there before sundown. It's only about ten now," said the guide, setting down his lantern. "How's the leg?"

"Fine! You're not alone?"

"Jim'll be along in a minute or so. They're in another canoe."

"They?"

"Sure! She's with him."

Lloyd uttered an exclamation of wonderment.

"Couldn't keep her back," added Burns. "Never saw a girl so bent on travelin'."

"Did she get word to her camp?"

"Not to-night. 'Phone's busted."

"But she could have caught a train."

"Yes. She could have—but she wouldn't. She left a message to be sent through from the station. Didn't seem to care much when it went out. But she sure did hustle us."

"You shouldn't have let her come," said Lloyd weakly. "Why, Jack, she's just been through an awful experience."

"That's funny, now. She never said anything about that. Just said she'd leave a message. I didn't know what it was. She talks like she was clean nutty about the woods. Never heard a girl ask so many questions."

They heard the grating of a canoe against the shore, and the guide went down with the lantern to meet it. A moment later Lloyd saw the tattered skirt flash past the light and she was kneeling at his side.

"All right?" she whispered.

"Yes; but why did you come?" he said protestingly, as he groped for her hand and found it.

"Why? Because I chose to."

"But I thought—I told you——"

"Billy, be quiet! We're to start back at daylight. There'll be a doctor at the station."

"But you shouldn't have come, child. It was too much."

She leaned closer to him and stroked his forehead. "Hush! Did you think that I wouldn't see you through? Why, Billy!"

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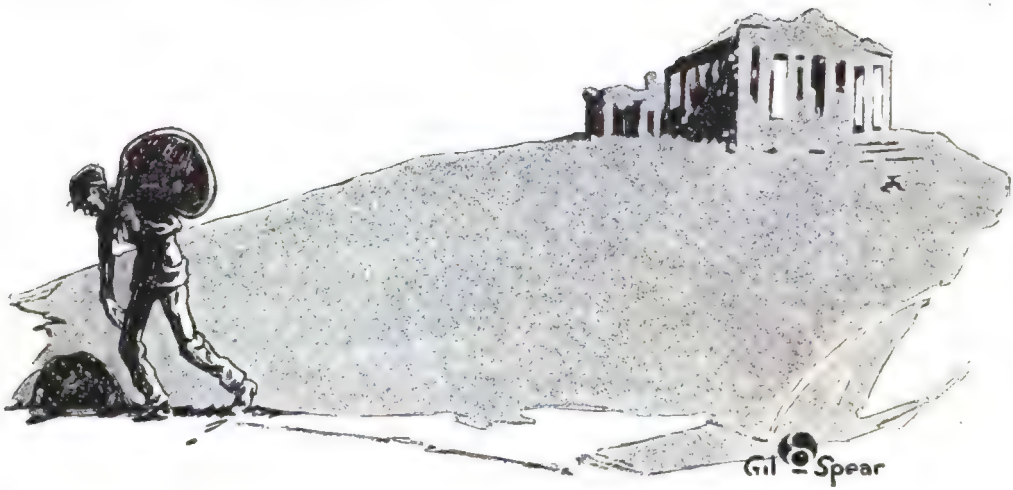
The "FAT" in the FIRE



The Temptation of the Insurance Policy

BY LEON PLATKY* *and* WALTER LIPPMANN

CARTOONS BY GIL SPEAR

A MAN is spending twenty years in jail because he didn't know that the New York Central Railroad had changed its schedule of trains on a certain June first some years ago. For if Eliot Warren and his dummy partner, Charles Reade, had paid attention to the new time-table, no one would have suspected that they intended to make money out of the fire at the Schuyler estate on the Hudson. They neglected to have the fire at a time when Warren could have received a telegram at his office in New York, rushed wildly for a train, and reached his partner's burning home before the flames were extinguished. Warren arrived a little too early. That is to say, he arrived before the first train.

This is what set the secret agent of the fire-insurance company to work. Reade said he had bought the property from his partner about two weeks before the fire. The records didn't show it. Reade's financial standing certainly didn't give any reason why he should want an estate overlooking the Hudson, for Reade didn't even have a bank account.

Just what he intended to do with the place was a problem. Through long neglect, the house and grounds had sunken into decay. The walks and drives were overgrown with weeds, the furniture was dried out by the heat of many summers, and mildewed by the damp of winters. The window-panes were broken. People living near by thought it was a haunted house. The fences had fallen in. Many of the rooms hadn't been aired since Major Schuyler's death; no fires had been lighted in the grates for years. The bathrooms were what our grandfathers used to call bathrooms. Except for the caretaker's little lodge, the place was a thing of dried wood,

*Formerly manager of the city department of the Underwriters' Protective Association.

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dust, cobwebs, weeds, and ancient odors.

Ten thousand dollars might have made the estate livable. And six thousand more every year would have been needed to keep it in condition. It was the kind of property rich people won't, and poor people can't, buy. But Reade was poor and he said he had bought it.

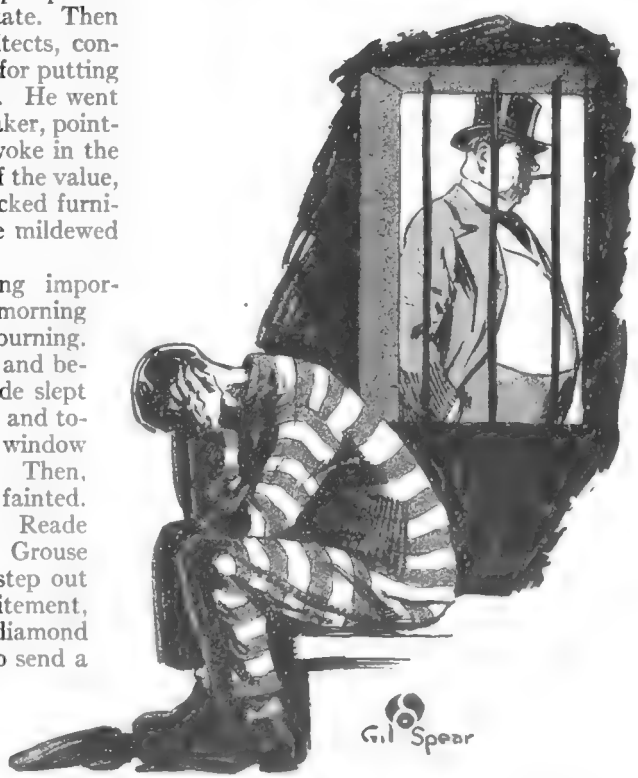
The secret agent saw that Warren must be the real owner. A search of the title showed a mortgage on the property for five thousand dollars, upon which the bank had secured a judgment by default and was preparing to foreclose. While Warren was in this difficulty, he had pretended to sell the property to his partner, Reade, some two weeks before the fire.

Reade had gone up to "his estate" to look it over. The caretaker, a simple-minded yokel named Grouse, welcomed him with a grievance. Warren had reduced his salary from forty to thirty dollars a month. Reade was very amiable and very grand. With an air of entire indifference to money, he raised Grouse's wages again. The caretaker was glad that at last a prosperous person had come to live on the estate. Then Reade called in plumbers, architects, contractors, and made preparations for putting the house into modern condition. He went through the place with the caretaker, pointed out the wonders of it, and awoke in the yokel's breast a new realization of the value, historic and financial, of the cracked furniture, the sooty pictures, and the mildewed woodwork.

Grouse went to sleep feeling important. At two o'clock in the morning he awoke to find the house burning. Grouse rushed to Reade's room and began to knock on the door. Reade slept on. Grouse finally aroused him, and together they stepped out of the window on to the lawn two feet below. Then, according to Grouse, Reade fainted. When the fainting was over, Reade couldn't express his gratitude to Grouse sufficiently for helping him to step out on to the lawn. During the excitement, Reade lost his pocketbook and a diamond pin. However, he found time to send a telegram at the village a mile and a half away. This was the telegram that, apparently, brought Warren from New York ahead of the train.

In the ruins were plenty of glass, mixed with nails, plaster, and a few rafters, two bed springs, Grouse's stove, a dilapidated old boiler, part of an armchair, and the iron stand of a sewing-machine. The magnificent historic furniture, the valuable portraits of Major Schuyler's ancestors, and the great clock were gone entirely, leaving nothing but Grouse's vivid memory of them. Reade had nothing left but his insurance policy, amounting to $19,000.

Between the partners and this money stood the secret agent—a man who is known in insurance circles as an expert on "moral hazard." But between suspecting arson and proving it lies the whole difficulty of the moral hazard expert's profession. Grouse, the caretaker, and Reade were the only two people known to be within a mile of the fire when it broke out. Grouse had been tight asleep, waking only when the smoke came into his room and choked him. According to Grouse, Reade had been sleeping even more soundly. There was no one to prove that while Grouse had been



READE, THE DUMMY, WAS SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS. WARREN'S CASE NEVER CAME TO TRIAL.

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heroically banging at Reade's door, Reade had been stubbing his toe on Major Schuyler's historic furniture, trying to get back to bed so that he could be awakened dramatically.

So the agent did what all detectives do when they haven't any facts to prove their case. He pretended to have all the facts: He explained to Reade that the estate was useless; that Warren was the real owner; that the mortgage about to be foreclosed showed that Warren needed money; that the $19,000 insurance policy was the easiest way to get the money; and that Warren's arrival on a train that hadn't been running for a month proved that both Reade and Warren were liars.

Reade was bullied by this show of knowledge and confessed. He told how he had set the fire under orders from Warren. Both men were indicted; Reade, the dummy, was convicted of arson and sentenced to twenty years in jail. Warren, who, according to Reade, conceived, planned, and directed the crime, engaged a different lawyer. His case never came to trial.

We think of a crime like this as the exceptional work of exceptional men. But to the secret agent who exposed it, it is one of the neglected commonplaces of the whole present discussion about fires and fire-prevention. There is nothing exceptional about it to him. The crooked fire isn't a chance happening to the expert on "moral hazard." It's a thing that can be predicted.

For example: Not so long ago this same secret agent was sent up to see the owner of a large umbrella house. His errand was an unimportant one. It concerned some trifling detail in the man's insurance policy. But when the agent came in through the door he was struck by the odor of fresh paint and the impressive air of a place in spick-and-span condition. His knowledge of business conditions told him that the stock of umbrellas was too large. His knowledge of fashions told him that the umbrellas were out-of-date. So, in an offhand manner, he asked the proprietor what his prices were. They were higher than anything umbrellas like this could realize if it rained steadily for ten years. The agent did his errand, looked as innocent and stupid as possible, excused himself, and made straight for the nearest telephone.

"Cancel your policies on the —— Building," he warned the insurance company.

Two weeks later the place burned down. His company was the only one that escaped the loss. People marveled at his clairvoyance.

What they considered a kind of miracle was no more miraculous to him as a moral hazard expert than is the prediction of a financial panic by a good economist. Had he been consulted about the insurance policy in the Warren-Reade affair, he would have predicted that fire just as easily. He had simply looked over the umbrella people's business and decided that "they ought to have a fire." Here was a firm, he reasoned, with a herd of white elephants on its hands. Nobody would buy those umbrellas. There was no way of realizing on them. It was a typical "insurance stock"—merchandise out of date, prices up to date. In the safe was a policy saying that in case of fire the insurance companies would pay for the loss. That policy would really make the loss a gain. A calamity would be a blessing. The investigator knew of hundreds of cases in which a cigarette dropped into a pile of waste material had brought benefit to the holder of a large insurance policy. So because the umbrella people were ripe for a fire, he predicted a fire.

Not long ago a glass warehouse burned down. The adjusters for the companies agreed to settle with the owners for something more than $150,000. The companies were on the point of paying the loss, when this same investigator was sent up to the gutted building to see whether everything was what it seemed to be. He was told that four thousand cases of glass stored in one room had been burned "out of sight." At once, he knew there was something wrong, for no amount of squeezing could ever have got four thousand cases of glass into that room. So he called in the public weighers, and weighed all the débris. They counted in not only what was left of the glass, but the ceiling which had fallen in, and part of a wall. Either the glass had evaporated, or it had never been there. Then, by playing sleuth for a day or two, he found out from the elevator boy that the company had been sending away cases of glass for two weeks before the fire. The evidence was put before the owner of the warehouse, who accepted one dollar for the total value of his insurance policy.

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Not all of the crookedness in connection with fire-insurance policies is due to fires set deliberately. Just as, at the custom-house, the people who undervalue their goods are more numerous than the people who try to get by without paying any duty, so, in insurance, the people who overvalue their losses are more frequent than the people who commit arson. So common is this, in fact, that many hardly regard it as a crime. It is the kind of offense that is classed with not paying car-fare if the conductor doesn't ask for it, or selling shoddy as wool.

Some time ago a fire broke out in a public warehouse, where a number of large tobacco firms stored tobacco. It was really a very trifling affair. The damage to the building amounted to only thirty-one dollars. But the tobacco people insisted that the tobacco had been ruined by smoke and water. They claimed, and received, about $150,000. Several months passed, and by the merest chance one of the fire-insurance company adjusters had an opportunity to examine the books of one of the firms. He noticed that the ruined tobacco had been sold here and abroad without the slightest reduction in price. If it really had been spoiled it was the smokers who had suffered, and not the tobacco firm. The insurance money was clear profit. The adjuster insisted on seeing the books of the other firms. They, too, had sold their ruined stock at its original price.

Rather than have the facts made public, the tobacco people refunded their insurance award.

The Warren-Reade fire betrayed by a time-table, the umbrella people suspected of carrying an "insurance stock," the glass warehouse owner caught pretending to have squeezed too much glass into one room, the tobacco firms exposed by the mere coincidence that the adjuster remembered their loss of several months previous—all of these are cases where the loss was prevented or punished. Such are the moral hazards of the insurance business. How many cases there are that are never suspected, and so never detected, we can only guess.

Insurance men talk of them guardedly and in whispers. They will talk from now till the crack of doom about physical hazard, about the risk of one kind of construction as compared with another. They have elaborate maps showing the exposure of buildings, the quality and quantity of fire extinguishers, sprinklers, pumps, and fire-engines. But about the chances of fires which are deliberately set, or about the insurance losses which are deliberately manufactured after fires—in short, about moral hazard, there is nothing but silence, and holding of thumbs, and hoping that some other company will insure the crooks. Yet a recognized authority on moral hazard, who is an experienced investigator of crooked fires and crooked losses, says that fully twenty per cent. of the insurance money paid is for "losses due to incendiarism or to exaggerated settlements." If accurate, that means a yearly tribute of some fifty million dollars throughout the country.

Every year the public pays the insurance companies five hundred million dollars in premiums. Half of that comes back to a part of the public in payment of losses, for the companies collect about twice as much as they pay out. That means about two hundred and fifty million dollars returned to the public. If fifty of those millions go to swindlers, it means that the public pays each year one hundred million dollars in premiums to cover this fifty million. If crooked losses are fifty millions, there is no escaping the one hundred millions that must be collected to pay for them.

The fire marshal of New York City, whose business it is to investigate the origin of fires, corroborates that estimate from his own experience, and states that ten per cent. of the fires in New York City are of incendiary origin. When you recall that former Fire-Chief Croker has pointed out the danger of a great conflagration in certain highly inflammable and badly protected parts of the city, the tribute in property, prosperity, and lives that we may have to pay becomes a matter which no prudent community can afford to overlook. It is like the cholera, typhoid, or any other pest. To ignore it is a crime.

There is nothing uncanny about the subject. True, the information is carefully buried by agencies in dread of the law of libel. This accounts for the secrecy practised by those who know, and the mystery affected by those who don't. To look into the subject is to follow an underground trail—to see our industrial life where it is most sordid and most disgraceful. It is to see the dirty lining of business. It means

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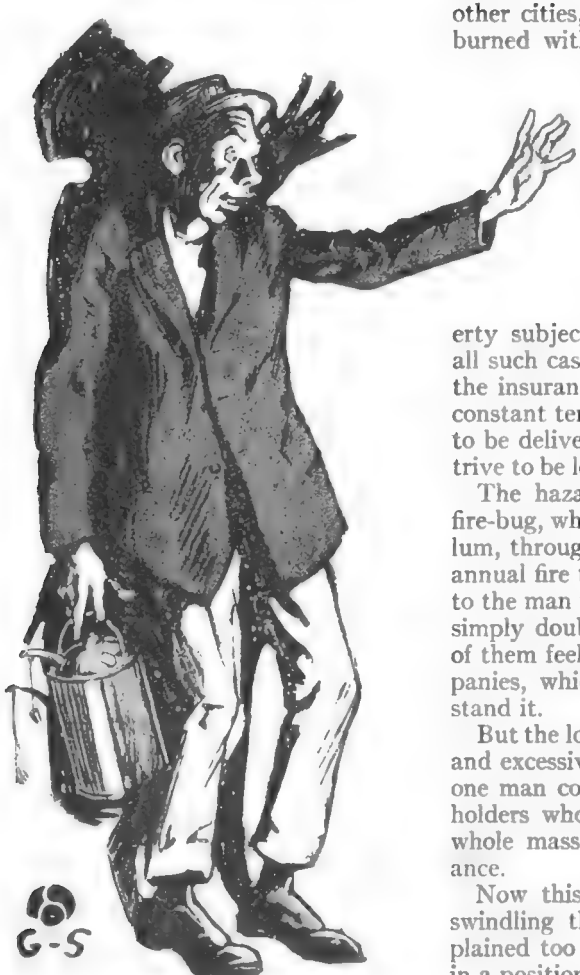
coming in contact with all kinds of commercial swindlers and insurance crooks, with smuggling, faking, arson, lies, and dishonest failures, extending from the little pedler to the big corporation. Here is muck indeed, the kind which might be charged up against the wickedness of human nature and covered up, were it not possible to find the causes of it. And, having found the cause of evil, there is no evil men can't cure if they will it.

In the first place, then, moral hazard begins where prosperity ends. Let a man be caught with a stock of goods on his hands which nobody will buy, with expenses piling up and bills payable coming in, and his insurance policy becomes like the lure of Satan. This is the time when many a man will grasp at any straw, and listen to any advice. To-day, for example, the day of the cheap piano is passing. People who used to buy dollar-a-week pianos are buying some variety of talking-machine or automatic music-maker. Moral hazard has begun, and consequently the more conservative companies are refusing to write insurance on the less expensive instruments. They know that moral hazard increases when the sales fall off.

As with the pianos, so it is with clothing which is subject to quick changes of fashion, or with factories and public-service plants in which the equipment has become antiquated, car barns of bankrupt street-railroads like those of New York and certain other cities, where barns and obsolete cars burned with surprising consistency in the years 1906, 1907, and 1908; novelties and knick-knacks which are the fad of one season and forgotten the next; distilleries in prohibition states, summer hotels which have lost their patronage, fly-by-night concerns, amusement resorts that no longer amuse, and all kinds of property subject to financial dry-rot. For in all such cases, moral hazard has begun, and the insurance policy is nothing less than a constant temptation, from which some pray to be delivered and into which many contrive to be led.



THE FIRE-BUG, WHO OUGHT TO BE IN A LUNATIC ASYLUM.

The hazard runs all the way from the fire-bug, who ought to be in a lunatic asylum, through the manufacturer who has an annual fire to clear out his useless stock, up to the man who has an accidental blaze and simply doubles his claim for the loss. All of them feel that they are beating the companies, which, they say, are rich and can stand it.

But the long-suffering, endlessly tolerant, and excessively patient public pays. When one man collects a loss, it isn't the stockholders who pay him his money. It is the whole mass of people who take out insurance.

Now this art of beating the public by swindling the companies need not be explained too minutely. For it may land us in a position something like that of Detective William J. Burns in a notorious counterfeiting case. In order to show the jury

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how the counterfeiting had been done, he actually made some bogus money in the court-room. Six months later he had to arrest one of the jurymen on a charge of counterfeiting.

It is enough to illustrate the general course of the fire swindle:

It becomes more or less known that Smith's business is bad and failure is staring him in the face. A "fire pedler" hears about him and manages to meet him. He is very sympathetic; he understands. Has Smith any fire insurance? Only three thousand dollars. That isn't enough. Why not leave everything to him? He can make a profit on that stock of goods. Smith, more or less bewildered, turns over his policy to the smooth and sympathetic friend. For, of course, Smith doesn't understand fire-insurance policies. But his friend does, and through a broker who has influence in a fire-insurance office by reason of the business he controls, the fire-insurance policy is increased and made proof against attack.

Then Smith is told to take a vacation on such and such a day. That establishes an alibi in case any one inquires into the leakage of gas which caused an explosion and ruined all of Smith's valuable goods. But, as a matter of fact, there is no need for an alibi, for the man sent up by the company to adjust the insurance loss is a friend of the friend of Smith. So Smith realizes on the insurance policy, the friend gets something, the adjuster something, perhaps, and everybody is richer for the deal.

After that, ordinary business is a pretty tame affair for Smith. He gets to know the brokers who can always get insurance for anybody, and the adjusters who will adjust without asking questions. Like the Rake in the "Rake's Progress," he becomes an adept himself after a while. He becomes one of the comparatively few who know all the ins and outs of all the twists of an insurance policy. He knows all the requirements—"who to see," "the thing to do." Ordinary business may be merely a kind of preliminary to fires, until, perhaps, he becomes like Mr. Topkin, the cloak manufacturer, in whose honor the fire department on the East Side was long called "Topkin's Express."

Of course, the professional fire-bug with a long record of fires in many cities is comparatively rare. Like the man with a long record of murders, there aren't many of him. The so-called "arson trust" reported to exist in Chicago is in all probability nothing but a band of fire pedlers, in league with crooked merchants and insurance adjusters. One merchant in Chicago confessed to the police that his store and merchandise had been burned by arrangement with members of this gang. He committed suicide a few hours later, thus removing the

THE MANUFACTURER WHO HAS AN ANNUAL FIRE TO CLEAR OUT HIS USELESS STOCK.

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principal witness for the prosecution. Now, whether or not a "criminal plot of startling dimensions" will be uncovered is doubtful. But this at least is certain, if the statements of experts like Fire Marshal Beers are to be believed: the men who have had one crooked fire, or one crooked adjustment of losses after a fire, are not rare at all. They are probably as common as the smuggler, or the food adulterator, or the owner of rotten tenements.

Then why, you ask, hasn't something been done about it? Why hasn't a vigorous attempt been made at least to diminish the evil? For evil it surely is: Year in and year out, a wanton waste of life and property, which carries with it the terrible, haunting danger of a great conflagration. Smith burning down his little shop and getting a little crooked insurance money doesn't sound so bad, although all the Smiths combined—and some of them are bigger than most people imagine—amount to a constant drain on the wealth and welfare of the country. But the possibility that Smith's little blaze in a bad wind may travel and turn a whole district into a bonfire is always with us. It gives us the right to ask why something vigorous hasn't been done about it.

There are several people whose business it is to deal with the crooked fire and the crooked fire adjustment. In the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Richmond of New York City there is a fire marshal who is supposed to investigate the origin of all fires and to prosecute incendiarism. He has eight assistants, an interpreter, a stenographer, and a clerk. With that force the city of New York expects him to find out all about the origin of twelve thousand fires every year, gather evidence of crime, and present it to the Grand Jury. Think of nine men trying to investigate the cause of a thousand fires a month, of two hundred and fifty fires a week! In ten years there has been no increase in the force whose business it is to investigate the causes of fires, although the number of fires has been more than doubled in that time. Yet in that same period the fire-extinguishing force has been increased over one hundred per cent. Could anything be less intelligent that that?

New York City is by no means an exceptional case. When you compare the actual convictions for arson throughout the country with the estimates of the moral hazard experts, it is no exaggeration to say that public enterprise through its government is doing shamefully little to root out the moral cause of fires. When we turn to private enterprise the showing is worse. There is an association known as the National Board of Fire Underwriters. To that association belong the principal stock fire-insurance companies doing business in the United States. Second in the list of its purposes is the purpose "to repress incendiarism and arson." In order to carry that out, rewards are offered. In the year 1910-1911, there were seventy-one offers. As a result, one man was convicted in a little town in Michigan, and one in Pennsylvania. The Board of Fire Underwriters of the Pacific Coast offered ten rewards from November, 1910, to April, 1911. There is no record of any reward paid.

But why, again, isn't more done to lessen moral hazard? To be sure, arson is very difficult to detect, although cases of conviction do appear now and then. It is particularly hard to prove, as the record in New York City shows, where, out of fifty-four cases in one year, thirty-five failed to secure conviction; for the fire-bug is a man who knows how to cover his tracks, and the men whose business it is to follow him are, like the fire marshal of New York, tremendously underpaid and overworked.

Now, it would be wrong to give the impression that the companies pay all claims easily and without question. They don't, as plenty of honest people know. It is often true that the little man who does not understand the conditions of his fire-insurance policy is tripped up by some arrogant and unscrupulous adjuster. In fact, it is just the honest and the ignorant who are usually caught. The companies, irritated at the constant fraud being practised upon them, are not unlikely to turn upon some little, unimportant man who makes a blunder in filing his claim, and make a horrible example of him. The man who understands the game, and who has influential connections, wins out.

For example, a prominent banker in New York was lighting a gas jet in his dining-room. The wax taper he was using burned short, and he dropped it; the fringe of the table-cloth blazed up, and that burned a small hole in the rug. He put in a claim for $3500 total loss on the rug. An honest adjuster, who was sent up to the house to set-

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tle with him, declared the claim exorbitant because the rug could be repaired beyond detection for less than fifty dollars. The banker was furious, and put the adjuster out of his house. The claim was paid by the company, and the adjuster, who had tried to uphold its interest, never got another job from the company. The banker controlled a great deal of the insurance business of corporations in which he was director, and it was the gossip of those on the inside that the fire-insurance companies didn't care to antagonize him.

But no matter how skilful the swindlers may be, it seems unbelievable that institutions as powerful as fire-insurance companies don't accomplish more than they do. With all the boast and pride of American ingenuity behind them, are they really as helpless as they seem? Can't they do more?

Or is it that they don't want to? We have pointed out that the public pays for the crooked fire, that the man who thinks he is cheating the company is really cheating the public; for all the swindles of all the swindlers are reflected in the insurance rate. And if that is so, perhaps the fire-insurance companies are not interested in keeping down the rates.

They are not. That fact is undisputed by candid insurance men. The reason is deeper than any question of personal dishonesty.

Nothing is so good an advertisement for a fire-insurance company as a fire. Fires are the best way to keep people thinking about fires.

Just listen to what the general manager of the Scottish Union and the National Insurance Company of Edinburgh says. He is speaking to a group of insurance experts—to the Insurance and Actuarial Society of Glasgow: "Were there no fires, there would be no insurance business, and, on the other hand, the greater the fire damage the greater the turnover out of which insurance companies make profit." And further: "Speaking to-night as manager of a fire-insurance company, I say we can not make profits for our shareholders without fires, and, further, that within certain well-defined limits we welcome fires."

This is the center of the story. It is confirmed by authorities nearer home. Mr. Powell Evans is chairman of the fire prevention and insurance committee of the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Hardware Association, and the National Association of Credit Men. His report on Fire Waste of Created Resources at the first Conservation Congress in May, 1908, was later adopted by the National Board of Fire Underwriters as its official utterance.

Writing in the *Survey* of July 1, 1911, Mr. Evans says:

"The insurance interests are in a measure, because of their own commercial interest, indifferent to present waste. . . . So long as an insurance company does not have to pay out more than fifty per cent. of its premiums for fire loss, the unit profit is good. Therefore one-half of a high rate nets a greater final profit than the same proportion of a low one."

A high rate means a large commission to the broker, and a large fund for investment. So long as that continues, we shall have to admit frankly that the financial interest of insurance companies will not put them on the side of fire prevention. For whatever the human feeling of the men behind them may be, their business interest is an influence that tends to stand in the way of effective reform.

Now, of course, fire-insurance companies don't want whole cities to burn down. Conflagrations like that in San Francisco use up more than fifty per cent. of the premiums collected. That is too big a strain. But within limits, the constant menace of fires is one of the greatest assets of the insurance business. Add to that the feeling of each company that a reputation for fighting claims and questioning things too closely will drive the public to some other more lenient company; add the fear of antagonizing powerful people; make allowances for the difficulties of detection; cap them with this great fact that fires increase the fund of premiums collected, and you have the reason why we can't look to the insurance companies for relief from the burden of fires.

From the public which pays, from the people who risk their lives, must come the remedy. Private enterprise will not solve the public's problems. The public alone can solve them.

First of all, there must be light in every corner of the business—light on the records of the assured, light on their losses, light on the adjustments. To-day information is buried, volumes of important testimony taken in the fire marshal's office have never even been transcribed from shorthand.

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Darkness and mystery are the joy of crooks and the despair of reformers. This information must be available; it should be exchanged so that every state may have the benefit of the experience of every other state.

To gather this information so that it will be worth the paper it is written on, there must be a real fire marshal's office. It must be in charge of men who understand business thoroughly, who know the conditions that make men want fires. The force must be large and well paid.

That isn't all. The public must watch underwriting. It must use its information to see that no insurance is given to men with bad records, so it must control the brokers and agents. Like doctors, they should be examined and licensed by the state. Whenever they are found aiding crooks by deed or advice, their license should be taken away.

These reforms will do a great deal. Light, and public supervision of what the light reveals — this is the direction in which we must look for relief. It is an essential part of fire-prevention.

BARE MOUNTAIN TRAVELERS

BY SARAH N. CLEGHORN

IT WAS a Cromwell-featured boy
Who rode in front and faced the wind;
And a young home-bred mountain girl,
In hood and shawl, who rode behind.

The damsel, gazing left and right
Would twitch the young man's sleeve, and cry
"Is this the great world, brother?" when
They passed some thriving hamlet by.

But when the sun fell down the west,
The distance changed from blue to gray;
The sister's bonnet then at rest
Upon the brother's shoulder lay.

And neither saw the track they rode;
But high on Baremount's windy spine
They seemed to see their father's house
All dark beneath its frozen pine.

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A PEACH of a STORY

by JOHN PALMER GAVIT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY M. LEONE BRACKER

"THE CHIEF says you're to go with me."

Jimmy was the star reporter. It was a great honor to share an assignment with him. Besides, he was my best friend.

"Nix," I said.

"I told him you didn't want to go."

"I'll tell him myself," I said, and walked into the chief's office. Also, I thought of several places where I could apply for a job.

The Chief looked up, with an expressionless face, from a galley-proof.

"Well, Bennett, what's the trouble?" He saw something in my face, evidently.

"Jimmy says you wish me to go with him to Drearwood for that execution."

"*Of* course."

"Chief," I began, "this is the first time I ever refused an assignment."

He raised his eyebrows. "Why begin now?" he inquired, with unexpected mildness.

"I don't want this one."

"*Of* course! That's why you're going."

"I don't believe in capital punishment at all! Send somebody else; somebody whose——"

"Your feelings, my son, are your best qualification for this job."

"Do you mean——?"

"Certainly! That's just what I mean. Barrett could produce a picture-story of this triple killing to beat the band. That's the kind I *don't* want. You're the only man on the staff who can do it *the way I want it done.*"

"Do you, too, disbelieve in capital punishment?" I asked, hopefully. I might argue him out of his desire.

"Capital punishment be damned! I want a good story—*your* story."

"The story of a man horrified at the whole——"

"*Of* course! Can't you see it? Go as far as you like. But what I want is what will make all the old women and chambermaids read it with their eyes popping out, and then go to bed with all the lights turned on. Jimmy'll handle the news end of it; you'll write the story—*your* story! Get out of here, now!"

Jimmy and I took the late afternoon train for Drearwood, the site of the great state prison, three hundred miles up-state among the mountains.

"What do you know about this murder?" asked Jimmy. We were in the dining-car. The sun, over the opposite hills, was sinking in a vast bank of crimson clouds. The broad river, between, was a sea of blood.

"I only know it is a crime against civilization!"

"Oh, splash! I mean the original crime—the murder of the old uncle."

"Only that the three boys went to his house at night, and, when the old man refused them money, shot him to death."

"And you're sorry for 'em?" There was a sort of tentative disgust in Jimmy's tone.

"I am not sorry for *them*. I am sorry for the great state that brings up such boys, and when they do what they have been carefully educated to do, can find no solution of the problem except to kill the boys."

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"Aha!" Jimmy was noncommittal. He added, briskly: "I brought along a wad of clippings about the thing. Barrett wrote the story of the crime; here's the proof."

I had no appetite. So, while Jimmy ate his dinner, I read the clippings which told how the three Harris boys went, masked, to the house of their old uncle, in the darkness of a Christmas Eve, flung in his face a demand for money, and upon his refusal killed him in his tracks; how their shoes fitted exactly the footprints in the snow; how skilful lawyers, for whose hire the distracted mother sold the clothing from her back and begged from door to door, fought for their lives before the jury, before the Court of Appeals, before the governor. There was a harrowing word-picture of the scene in the executive chamber, when the widowed mother went on her knees before the governor—in vain.

There was no room for doubt of their guilt. The wretched lads had been the terror of three counties. Beginning with truancy, they had passed rapidly through the stages of chicken-theft, horse-stealing, barn-burning, and general blackmail, crowning it all at last with a reckless and cowardly murder. From their infancy they had been schooled to crime. The oldest was twenty-four; the youngest just turned nineteen.

Arriving soon after daylight at Brayville Junction, we got a hurried breakfast in the dingy hotel, and then transferred to the single-track railroad which was to take us the last sixty miles up among the mountains to Drearwood.

The foul smoking-car was crowded, even so early in the morning. There were six or eight other newspaper-men. Several of the other passengers were to be among the dozen legal witnesses of the execution, in accordance with the statute. Three or four were doctors, journeying all that distance to see the triple autopsy after the execution. One of them, red-faced, red-bearded, boisterous in talk and laughter, was Dr. Wakefield, the world-renowned psychopathologist who had sworn before the courts and before the governor that the Harris brothers were sane.

Dr. Zagonyi was another—the famous surgeon-alienist, a thin, sharp-eyed little man, whose slender fingers had pried into the brains of almost every man whom the state had killed since the introduction of the electric chair. He sat in front of us in the car, and Jimmy introduced me to him. He was in excellent spirits.

"This is a rare opportunity," he said, "to test in the brains of these young men, the offspring of common parents, the resemblances of inheritance in their morphological expression in collateral lines. Aside from the criminological interest of the case, its most important scientific feature lies in the fact that the condemned are brothers. I am told that they are more than ordinarily fine specimens of physical manhood, and all in perfect health."

In the back of the car two deputy-sheriffs sat behind a double seat in which four men, shackled in pairs, were chained to the arms of their seats. They also were going to Drearwood. One of them, it seemed, was not to stay long in prison—but he was not to come away. He had killed his young wife in a drunken frenzy. His face was thin and sallow. His eyes, deep-set, looked as if already he had begun to die; it seemed to me at times that *he was remembering!*

The sun rose in a cloudless east and smiled upon farms and flocks and hamlets in the green valleys through which at first we passed. For an hour, through the dips in the hills, we saw the great lake behind us, rose-silver in the morning radiance. The corn was ripe in the fields; the peaceful cattle cropped late pastures. But here and there crimson maples smeared blood on the green of the woods.

We climbed on, up into the mountains, toward the thing we had to do. The grades grew steeper; the chill of the early frosts in the mountains found its way into the car. The herbage changed from green to dun. The farmhouses gave way to whitewashed cabins; these to the weather-beaten shacks of hunters.

The habitations ceased. We were in a wilderness of boulders and ragged hill-faces. Once we passed through a forest in mourning—ten thousand blackened trunks that told of pines that had been. In the depths of abysmal gorges we saw writhing threads of foam.

The men in the car had stopped talking.

Dr. Zagonyi was a scientist. He did not notice that he was the only person in the car who was using his voice. Turning suddenly to Jimmy, he said:

"It will be most interesting."

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"Do you expect to find marks of crime in their brains?" I asked.

The doctor smiled indulgently. "I do not. Save as the brain occasionally exhibits lack of development of the intellectual and reflective faculties, I have seldom found in necropsies upon executed criminals any visible peculiarities to differentiate them from average citizens who had died like gentlemen, in their beds, of eminently respectable diseases."

"Then, if these men had grown up in other environment, favorable to the development of their 'intellectual and reflective faculties,' they, too, might have died like gentlemen, in their beds?"

"That," said Dr. Zagonyi, indifferently, "is a question for the philosopher and the philanthropist, rather than for the anatomist."

"What about that poor devil in the back of the car?" asked Jimmy. "The one next to the window, with the white face. He is to die next month."

The alienist studied the condemned keenly for a moment. "So?" he said. "Looks like an alcoholic. It is hazardous to diagnose from superficial appearances, save in well-marked specimens. I shall be able to tell you—when did you say?—next month?"

The little brown station at Drearwood stood midway up a bare, brown hillside. Almost the entire carload disembarked, and stood for a space upon the platform. The party of new-made convicts and their guards set out at once on the yellow road that led up-hill.

The young man who was never to come down turned his head and looked after the departing train. For an instant his eyes flashed as with some vague thought of resistance. But one of the guards pushed him roughly. The murderer's shoulders suddenly sagged. He shuffled on.

The road—there was no other—climbed straight up an eighth of a mile to a cluster of houses, and ended at the wall. It was a gray-green wall; along the top little silhouettes of men paced back and forth—the guards. The sky was still clear, but the tone had gone out of the blue, and the light somehow seemed thin. Yet all the shadows that it made were black. The wind out of the mountains was very cold.

"That is the prison?" I asked, superfluously, of some one beside me on the platform.

"Yes," the man replied listlessly.

THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS NEVER TO COME DOWN TURNED HIS HEAD. FOR AN INSTANT HIS EYES FLASHED AS WITH SOME VAGUE SORT OF RESISTANCE.

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I looked at him. His shaven face seemed molded of sun-baked putty. His clothes were barred across with narrow stripes. They did not fit him.

"Come on; we'll go up and see the warden." Jimmy's hand on my arm was warm and human.

"He talks like a corpse," I said.

"Who?"

"That man in convict clothes. How does he happen to be down here?"

"That's a trusty. They do errands for the prison."

"Don't they ever run away?"

"Mulligan!" Jimmy called to a man in blue uniform, climbing the road ahead of us. Mulligan turned.

"My associate here, Mr. Bennett, wants to know if the trusties ever run away."

"No. They know better."

"And the other prisoners—don't they ever try?"

"Oh, yes; they *try*. But they don't get away."

"What do you do to catch them?"

"Nothing. Wait for 'em to come home again. They always do."

"Why? How?"

"Where would they go, in this wilderness? Look around here. Ain't this the God-forsakenest country you ever saw?"

I looked. The hill on which we stood sloped steeply down, past the railroad, to a flat valley stretching away five or six miles to where the mountains rose again to the jagged southern sky-line. A narrow stream, thinly edged with trees, meandered across the plain. It seemed in doubt which way to go—whether to go at all. Off to the right I saw the roofs of a small village. There was no shelter in the scattered woods. Aside from the village there was but one sign of human habitation—a tiny huddle of mean huts beside the road, a half-mile below. "God-forsakenest"—the very word!

"Dutch Jared didn't come back home," remarked Jimmy.

"No, he didn't," assented Mulligan. "Neither did Buck Thomas. We found 'em both, over there in the Notch."

The place toward which he pointed was a cleft in the sky-line, ten miles to the south.

"Dutch Jared broke his leg, and starved to death. We knew him by his stripes—there was nothing else but clean, white bones."

"What happened to Buck Thomas?"

"Bitten by a rattlesnake, I judge."

We trudged on, up the hill toward the cluster of houses and the long gray wall. Not far ahead of us trudged also the handcuffed convicts and their guards. I recall the figure on the right of the rear couple. He walked as if he carried a trunk.

I braced my own shoulders.

"There *is* something depressing about this place," said Jimmy, without looking at me. "I've been here several times. I always feel it. I think I'd die here in a little while, myself."

"Lots does," said Mulligan. And he went on, indignantly: "And when I think how I turned heaven and earth to get this job!—Say, I'd be tickled to get a pick and shovel, if it was only to be free."

"Don't you feel free?" I inquired.

"Free? They ain't a 'lifer' in the prison that ain't freer than his keepers."

The prison, and the scattering of houses in front of it, stood on a sort of shelf in the hill. Behind it the slope went on, more steeply, to its forest-crowned summit. The long front of gray wall served as a background for the hamlet. Here and there was a bit of a flower-garden, with the remains of frost-bitten plants sticking desperately up out of the ground; or in a window some hint of protest against the overshadowing gloom of the prison. But mostly the houses seemed to shrink back from the gray wall. We passed some children in the streets. They stared at us with the uncurious eyes of fishes.

"It's a little place," said I.

"Little?" ejaculated Mulligan. "It's the second largest in the state!"

"I mean the village."

"On this side of the wall—about five hundred people."

"And on the other?"

"About three thousand."

I looked up at the gray wall. The sentries, with shouldered rifles, looked down at us in silence as we passed beneath—men standing on the top of a great dam; behind it a vast menace. If that dam gave way!

"Who lives here, besides the prison people?"

"In God's name," cried Mulligan, "who else would?"

"What do you do with yourselves when you're off duty?"

"Wait for the next time on. There's L'Hommedieu's, down there at the corner,

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"TOM DEMANDED THE HARDEST PLACE. THEY WERE ARGUING, EACH CLAIMING FOR HIMSELF THE RIGHT TO 'THE WORST OF IT.'"

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where we hang around, between-whiles, and drink, and maybe play a game of cards. The hotel bar, right here, is too near the gate. And, of course, there's the church, for the women."

"Don't you ever have parties, dances?"

"Never in my time. Under the shadow of *that?*" He pointed at the gray wall.

We found the warden up on the hill back of the prison. He was gazing off across the hills. Jimmy and I both knew the kindly-faced man. He greeted us with the ghost of a smile, and went on, as if we had been overhearing his soliloquy:

"Ye gods, what a place for human beings to live!"

He waved his hand over the prison, taking in also the whole bleak panorama at our feet. Within the walls we could see little processions of striped men, each with its blue-clad keeper, going about on the grim errands of the place.

"Where is the death-house?" I asked.

The warden pointed.

"This is an awful thing to have to do!" I said.

"I swore to do it." He did not look at me.

"You hate it, I imagine."

He spat upon the brown sod. Then he answered: "I know these boys committed hellish murder; I'm no theorist about the death-penalty. I've my duty to do, and I shall do it. But—these three lads: you see—the oldest has always led the others in mischief, and in everything else. And to-morrow at dawn I've got to—they'll die. I'm giving up the job. This is the last. I've resigned."

"But they are guilty," said Jimmy.

"I—I've got three boys of my own," said the warden.

Another man sat on a rock a hundred feet above us. Jimmy and I went up to him.

"How are you, Daniels?" said Jimmy, cheerfully. He introduced me.

Daniels was a mild-spoken man, with a gray mustache so cut that it gave to his face the appearance of an irremovable smirk. His eyes were placidly serious. He stood to greet us; then sat again on his rock, and smoked a stubby pipe.

"I don't envy you your job," said I, to make conversation.

"Nor I yours," he retorted. "*My* work is necessary under the law. You pander for money to a lust for sensational reading-matter."

"We don't kill anybody."

"Neither do I. I only throw a switch. The prison engineer makes the current that kills. But neither of us is any more to blame than you."

"I disclaim any part in the matter."

"You can't. Every citizen has his share in it. I'm only one cog in the machine of government—no more responsible than the warden down there, who obeys the mandate of the court; than the court which imposed the sentence prescribed by the law; than the jury which found the verdict; than the district-attorney who prosecuted the case. Back of all of us are the legislature which passed the law and the governor who signed it. And back of them are the people who stand for it. That's where you come in."

"But I don't believe in capital punishment!"

"No more do I."

"Didn't you invent this Chair?" cut in Jimmy, to help me.

"I perfected an apparatus which doesn't torture and burn the poor devil that's got to die."

"An executioner who doesn't believe in executions?"

"You can put it that way. Again and again, I have heard men about to die in the chair protest their innocence. Most were lying, of course; it was just automatic reflex struggling against extermination. But not all. We have surely taken the lives of some innocent men. And I don't believe the state has any right to take that which it can not restore."

"You take it philosophically."

"I accept my share of the responsibility. What I have to do—somebody must do it—I try to do as well as I can. A clean electrical job. And I make good."

Mulligan took us to the death-chamber. We passed first into the prison-yard through the great gate in the gray wall. Inside, along the wall, a graveled space some twenty feet wide stretched like a broad driveway edging the close-cut lawn of the outer yard.

"That space is lighted at night with those search-lights at the corners," Jimmy explained. "Nothing the size of a rat could reach the wall without being shot."

We walked on. Twice we passed the little groups of convicts in stripes. They

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eyed us, some with furtive curiosity; most with black scowls. We stopped at the warden's office. Within, a trusty was writing with swift fingers at a typewriter.

"Come over here," said Jimmy, and led me to a window opening on the inner yard. "See that?"

On the window-casing, shoulder-high, was a little box, with wires leading from it. On its front was a dial, about three inches in diameter, with a needle pivoted in the center.

"That box contains a buzzer," Jimmy said, "with which we shall signal from the execution-room to-morrow morning, as the thing proceeds. One of us—you, I think—will be in there by the Chair, and will signal with the push-button that's in there, as the details develop. I shall be in here, and I've prepared a code, which I will explain to you to-night when we test the wire. O'Brien, the operator, will be here on the last train, and we shall send the bulletins and the story from here."

He pointed to telegraph instruments on the long table which extended away from the window.

Mulligan led us across the inner yard, and through one of the cell-houses. The place was full of the animal reek of a menagerie.

"What is that humming noise?" I asked.

"That's the dynamo, down-stairs," replied Mulligan.

"Where the current for the Chair is——"

"Yes. We're building a new power-house, over on the far side of the yard, where the prisoners can't hear it."

I wondered what difference that made.

We came at last to a door in a low stone building, and entered a room twenty feet long and twelve wide. The floor and walls were of stone. The walls were freshly whitewashed, and the air was damp and close. A small, barred window high at one end let in a twilight.

I saw a double row of chairs under the window; made ready for an audience.

And there, at my hand was the Chair.

It was a large Chair, set stoutly upon a wooden pillar. It had broad arms, and a foot-rest affixed in front. On the arms and the foot-rest were wide, thick straps, and a broad leathern belt ran breast-high across the front of it. All the straps and the belt bore great black buckles.

Above the back of the Chair stood a contrivance of brass and coiling wires, and a curious mask-like harness, the size of a man's head.

"That is It," said Mulligan.

Behind *It* was a screen of boards, head-high, and on the back of the screen a great electric switch, centered in a circle of brass contact-disks. At dawn to-morrow it would swing down. It seemed even now to be awaiting the Moment.

I stood before a little steel door, studded with bolts. There was another door beside me. That was a wooden door.

"That steel door opens to the condemned cells," Jimmy answered my look. "The three boys are just on the other side of it."

No sound came through the little door.

"And the other door—the wooden one?"

"That's the autopsy-room, where they take 'em afterward."

Mulligan opened the wooden door—it was not locked—and led us into a small room. Its walls and floor were of stone, and it also had a small, barred window, close to the ceiling. Three long tables stood under a cluster of electric lights. Each table was a little longer than the length of a young man's body.

Returning to the death-chamber, Jimmy took from a hook on the wall an arm's-length of wire, ending in a pear-shaped push-button.

"Here's where you'll sit," said he. The place was nearest the door, and within six feet of the Chair. "And with this button in your hand you will signal to us in the office as each detail——"

"Jimmy," I interrupted, "I wouldn't sit in this room to-morrow for all the money in the world!"

"You'd better," said Jimmy seriously. "It's easier, here where you can see, than in there, *imagining*. I've done both."

"Not here," I said decidedly.

"Very well," he said gravely. "Only remember, I warned you."

"Let's get out of here!" I cried.

The sun had gone down behind the hills as we recrossed the inner yard. Coming round the corner of the office-building, we almost ran into a man and a woman. The man was a priest, white-haired and white-faced. He was talking in a low tone to the woman. She was in garb of deepest mourning. A heavy black veil hid her face absolutely.

Mulligan touched his cap to the priest.

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"That is Father LeClaire," he said.

"And the woman?"

"The mother of the boys. She is going now to see them for the last time."

"Whom will she have left?"

"Not a soul in all the world. She has been a widow since the lads were little children. You might say they never had a father. They murdered her only brother, and to-morrow at dawn, when they die for it, she will be alone."

"Three sons at once—a whole family blotted out!"

"The other day, talking to me," continued Mulligan, "she called them 'my three babies.'"

We tested the signal-line that night, and perfectly understood the code with which the tidings were to be flashed from the death-chamber to the newspaper-men in the office. The three reporters permitted to witness the execution were obliged under the law to attend also as official witnesses, and the door would not be opened until the executions were completed and the three death-certificates had been signed by each of the witnesses.

Each stage was to be signaled by Jimmy with his push-button to the little buzzer on the window of the warden's office. There was a signal for every imaginable contingency.

It was still black night when we left the hotel next morning. A mist had climbed from the valley. I felt very cold as we walked along in silence under the wall toward the gate of the prison. The glare of the search-lights was diffused through the fog; against it we saw the figures of the sentries, pacing along the top.

A silent guard, standing at "Port Arms," scrutinized our passes by the light from a lamp in the archway, and admitted us through a wicket in the main gate. We crossed the lighted space within the wall. I felt uncomfortably as if the sentry over the gate were sighting at the spot between my shoulders.

In the office, the warden, with a face of stone, greeted us in a whisper. We all walked on tiptoe. Later, somebody spoke about the tiptoeing. In the shadow at the back of the room the putty-faced trusty stood motionless, a blotch upon the darkness.

"Which is to go first?" asked Jimmy. He also whispered.

"Willie, the little one," answered the warden. "They settled that just now. The other two agreed that the first would be easiest. Tom and Gerald forced him to take the first place."

"And who last?"

"Tom. He demanded the hardest place. They were arguing, each claiming for himself the right to 'the worst of it.' Tom insisted upon being last, as the oldest."

"Any sign of breaking down?"

"No. They'll be game to the last. Father LeClaire has been with them all night. He'll go with each to the Chair."

At last the warden led out the little party of eye-witnesses. We looked at each other, and waited.

My place was by the window, near the little dial. To see it I had to turn half round.

Beside me sat O'Brien, our operator, already exchanging messages with our office, three hundred miles away. The Chief, he said, was there, waiting for the story. An "extra" was ready for the press, lacking only what we were now to send.

The minutes dragged. The reporters in the room were writing—of the weather, of an apocryphal sunrise, of prison scenes—anything to keep busy, and to hold the wire. Now and then some one would venture a word, and get a monosyllable in reply. Most of us watched the little dial on the window.

The telegraph sounders, tuned low, rattled off the stories, word by word, line by line, sheet by sheet.

A match snapped; everybody jumped. Boyle, of the *News*, giggled foolishly as the flame flared above a pipe. Mostly there was silence, save for the soft clicking of the instruments.

Five minutes passed—ten, fifteen. What in the world were they doing?

Yet we knew well enough—O'Brien was sending it, from my own copy:

The witnesses took their seats in the little stone room, facing the grim Chair, in which, within the space of a half-hour, three young lives in the morning of their manhood were to be obliterated. . . . The warden stood before the little audience and cautioned them. No matter what might happen, they must keep their seats and absolute silence. They were to understand that the guards and the physicians perfectly understood their duties and were competent to deal with any emergency.

The warden made an end of speaking, paus-

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WILLIE CAME, UNFALTERING, INTO THE LITTLE STONE DUNGEON. HE HELD A CRUCIFIX IN HIS HAND, BUT LOOKED BEYOND IT.

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ed a moment, then suddenly raised his hand. Electrician Daniels threw the switch.

Instantly a blaze of light from twenty lamps on a board across the arms of the Chair blinded the eyes that strained at it. A few seconds they were left; then turned low, then bright again, then low again; then out.

With little, quick steps the electrician came out from behind his screen, detached the lamps, and affixed the deadly electrodes.

He stepped back.

"All ready, sir," he said.

The warden made a sign to the guards. . . .

Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz! The little hand on the dial beside me spun round, and every heart stood still. The code, in Jimmy's writing—my hand shook so that I had to lay the paper down—"One long: Chair tests O.K. First man sent for."

I could hardly guide my pencil to fill into my bulletin all that was lacking—the time:

6.02.15 *A. M.—The Chair has been tested, and the guards have left the execution-chamber to fetch Willie Harris to his death.*

I could have sworn I heard the footsteps of the guards as they passed through the little steel door and along the stone pavement to the death-cells on the morning's business.

"Good-by, Gerald! Good-by, Tom!"—Couldn't you hear the lad's voice? Couldn't you see that last grip of the hands as the brothers parted and the slender youngest, scorning to show the least sign of weakness, followed the guards out where the audience waited?

No; there in the office you could hear nothing—see nothing. The telegraph instruments were still now. Every eye was on the dial.

"Don't they ever fight?" Mason, of the *Star*, blurted out.

"Fight!" Dumont, who answered, had seen executions. "The guards chosen for this job are the biggest in the prison. Those boys will die like rats in a trap. They don't get time to think."

O'Brien's steady "sending-hand," famous among telegraphers, streamed the "running story" smoothly to the wire, despite the fact that his eye was not on the copy, but on the dial. To our distant office went the picture of the business in the death-room:

Willie came, unfaltering, into the little stone dungeon through the bolt-studded door, past the wooden door, with head erect, with shoulders squared. He held a crucifix in his hand, but looked beyond it—at the monstrous Thing which awaited him.

Six steps carried the boy from the little steel door to the Chair. Without assistance he swung himself into it. The guards, drilled to their work, swiftly buckled the straps.

Father LeClaire, close by, was repeating the ancient prayers for the dying:

"*Delicta juventutis; et ignorantias ejus, quæsumus, ne memineris, Domine. . . .*"

The eyes of the lad were fixed on the little patch of sky framed by the grated window. . . .

"I hear they drug 'em, sometimes," little Boyle was saying to us. "You notice how——"

Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz! Bzz! Bzz!—"One long, two short: "Current turned on!"

Now the slender figure was tense against the creaking straps! The current was surging through the body! The——

"Great God! What's that noise?" somebody whispered hoarsely.

The sound came from nowhere, from everywhere—a beast-howl, a long, groaning snarl—indescribable. We gazed at each other. The bulletins lay unsent. The voice of the putty-faced trusty cut in:

"That's the prisoners, in their cells—they always do it."

"Always do—what?"

"Bellow like that, when the current is turned on."

"How do they know?"

"They hear the thump."

"What thump?"

"When the switch is thrown, the engine jumps. Once it threw the belt off the driving-wheel. You can hear it all over the prison—the resistance of the human body." He was an educated man: forgery.

"Christ!" whispered O'Brien.

The awful sound died down—stopped. We pulled ourselves together. The belated bulletin went through:

6.03.44 A. M.—At a signal from the warden, Electrician Daniels swept down the switch. The lad's body, instantly dead, leaped forward against the straps. The current: 1820 volts, eight ampères.

"How long do they keep it up?" asked O'Brien.

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Nobody attempted to answer. I strained my neck and watched the dial. Years passed. Would they never open that switch?

"Your signal-circuit is broken!" cried Mason.

"What would break it?" I don't know why I asked that.

"Your watch is stopped," broke in O'Brien, leaning over it.

"No, it's not. See the second-hand—it moves. It's the wire——"

Bzz! Bzzzzzzzzzz!—One short, one long; the code: "Voltage lowered to 200."

It was a relief to send the bulletin:

6.03.52 A. M.—After eight seconds of the full current, the pressure was lowered to 200 volts. The body sank back in the Chair.

"Is he dead?" whispered little Boyle.

"Dead enough. But they give him two or three more, to make sure."

"Never this again, for me!" said O'Brien.

My neck ached with watching the needle on the dial.

At last, with its snarling buzz, it flew round again, and we wrote in the time on the waiting blank:

6.07.07 A. M.—The doctors pronounce Willie Harris dead.

I wrote then what I knew without seeing or being told.

The lad's body was unstrapped from the Chair, and the guards carried him (I scratched the "him" and substituted "it") into the autopsy-room a few feet away. It sagged very limp in their arms as they passed through the wooden door and laid their burden upon one of the three long tables there.

Gerald was then sent for. On the way to his death he must pass that wooden door—must pass within six feet of the dead body of his brother, into whose living eyes barely five minutes ago he had looked farewell.

It was all repeated, now; only the time seemed to drag still more.

Again and again we were certain the wire had failed, and conjectured wildly what might be doing in that distant dungeon. The code contained a signal: "Program interrupted—wait for particulars." But the little buzzer was simply dumb.

"Damn that thing!" somebody exclaimed. But nobody stopped staring at the little dial. It was black-faced, I remember now, and the needle was of brass.

Twice more we heard the awful animal-howling of the convicts locked in their cells over the dynamo, and pictured synchronously a body straining against the thick straps with the black buckles.

I lived with Tom Harris alone in his steel cage while one brother and then the other was led out through the bolt-studded door.

At last it was over. Reluctantly the little messenger on the window yielded up the last signal, doled out the long release call which assured us that with due decorum the mandate of the court had been obeyed, and the majesty of the law vindicated!

O'Brien, looking over my shoulder, took the rest of the story from my pencil-point to the wire. I don't think I wrote it consciously. I have never read it since.

I was at the end of the last sheet when the door opened, and Jimmy ran in, with the other two newspaper-men, just released from the death-chamber. His face was rather pale, but his eyes were bright.

"How did it go?" he asked. He meant the story.

"Never send me on another job like this! You were right; I would rather be there than here."

He was swiftly reading my "sent copy."

"Where did you get it all? How did you know about the crucifix?"

"Imagined—as you said I would."

"What crucifix?" demanded Mason.

"Each man held it in his hand as he went to the Chair," replied Jimmy. "The first gush of the current turned the hand up rigid, and the crucifix stood erect. Then, when the voltage was let down, it fell slowly back, and would have dropped on the floor; but each time Father LeClaire gently took it from the hand."

"What are they doing now?"

"Cutting 'em up. I saw the three of them, on the tables, naked. Zagonyi says they're physically perfect. The brain of Willie, he says, is absolutely normal. He is beginning now on Gerald."

Just then the sounder clicked.

"Here's a message from the Chief," O'Brien said.

Jimmy took it. I looked over his shoulder.

"*The story is a peach. I told you so. Congratulations.*"

We took the noon train for home.

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The LAST GRIND for the BIG GAME

BY JAMES HOPPER

Author of "CAYBIGAN" "THE TRIMMING OF GOOSIE," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD GILES

SOME years ago, the "big" football games took place on Thanksgiving Day. Result: the United States split into three parts and the day desecrated; one-third of the population glumly thankless, an equal fraction turbulently and profanely thankful, and the small but respectable remainder, believers in an orthodox keeping of the day—with church, turkey, and cranberry sauce—highly scandalized. The Big Game now happens on a Saturday, toward the end of November.

Just a week before this, the last of the "preliminary" matches is played. This is fine sport—sometimes. If the team is strong and has developed without mishap, this game is apt to be a beautiful romp, a brilliant dress rehearsal. The team piles point upon point; it goes through its lighter and less experienced opponents with fine nonchalance. And the coaches, on the side-line, grin and chuckle and poke each other's ribs and admire the fine machine they have forged. In such a case, the last week of the season is almost a happy one. Comparatively light work keeps the team in condition and polishes its maneuvers to nickel-plated smoothness. The main problem left to the coaches is to keep their young men sufficiently humble, to chasten over-confidence.

But often this last preliminary game results in a big scare. The team strikes a snag. It goes up against that smaller-college eleven with tolerance and large magnanimity—and finds it made up of a bunch of wild-cats, lean and hard as nails, unabashed by tradition, desperately determined to win, and with a bag-full of unexpected and unorthodox tricks. The team starts in easily—and gets its nose scratched. It tries, harder, to sweep the youngsters off the field; they don't sweep. It tries still harder; nothing doing. And it never does do it. It does not score; the game is a tie. And the coaches, on their haunches along the side-lines, catch sight suddenly of unsuspected and glaring defects.

THE COACHES ALONG THE SIDE-LINES CATCH SIGHT SUDDENLY OF UNSUSPECTED DEFECTS

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Men on whom they have counted, fail them; neglected players, when substituted, rise to the crisis and prove that they have been wrongly neglected; cunningly devised trick-plays fail ludicrously; chaos reigns; it seems necessary to begin the season's work all over again—and there are only six days left!

When this happens (and it often happens), the last week of the football season is one of toil, and the Monday beginning it is a blue Monday.

THE DEPOSED "STAR" IS ON THE SIDE-LINES, WITH COMPRESSED LIPS AND FROWNING BROWS, ACHING FOR A CHANCE TO RETRIEVE HIMSELF.

Blue indeed! The coaches have not gone to church on Sunday; they have conferred all day and have settled upon stringent measures. They now gather the squad in the hall of the training house. Squatting in groups upon the floor, with serious and wan faces, these young heroes listen to an unmerciful grilling. Every fault, every mistake, is flashed before their eyes as by a bull's-eye lantern. Terror is put into their souls. And one, perhaps a star, who, in that last game, has showed a want of moral force, of the "grit" inexorably demanded of the football man, is disgraced publicly, and dropped to the "Scrub."

Oh, yes, it's lots of fun to "play" football! Tingling, the men are now sent out upon the field. From that last game they have emerged classified in the minds of the coaches. There are those who have done their work well and who have borne the brunt of the fighting. They are sore and stiff; for their individual good a rest would be best. But they can't rest, for they are the fixed portions of the team in which new parts are to be fitted. Then there is the boy who, rather obscure through the season, has displayed, when substituted in the game, qualities of grit and energy and intelligence which have convinced the coaches that he must be on the team. He must be "pounded" into shape. "Pounded" is literally true: he must be hammered into his position till he fits, till he amalgamates, flesh, blood, and spirit, with the team, which is *one* being. And, last, there is the deposed "star," the "star" who, through being too sure of his superiority, has gradually degenerated and finally has failed; in whom, perhaps, there has been suddenly revealed the slightest flaw of the spirit. He is on the side-lines, with compressed lips and frowning brows, aching for a chance to retrieve himself in his own eyes and in those of the coaches. But the eyes of the coaches pass him by and refuse to see him.

It is a cheerless afternoon. The practise is "secret;" the gates are closed and the great stands are empty. The worried coaches (there is a whole flock of them, now, come from all parts of the country at the news of the plight of their old college) speak only in whispers, out of lugubrious faces; a funereal silence broods within the enclosure. To make the men feel still better, a cold haze lies upon the land, and the sun that shines through it looks like a frozen fried egg.

The coaches take the men who must be "pounded" into shape and teach them individually. Then a whistle blows, and the head coach, from a position in the center of the field, calls out successively eleven names. He weighs upon each name with a sort of solemn finality. They are *the* eleven names; the names of the members of the day's 'Varsity; of the 'Varsity which on the com-

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ing Saturday will have the honor of the college in its keeping. The disgraced "star" grinds his teeth (metaphorically; his face remains stolid). His name has not been pronounced. And the boy who by his work in the disastrous game has made the team nearly swoons, and then, at an encouraging slap from one of his less lucky fellows, bounds out upon the field. The last out of the mouth of the coach, his name has just been called.

The 'Varsity thus formed runs through signals; that is, it goes up and down the field in a rehearsal of all its complicated attacks. Up and down the field it charges, up and down, up and down again, the voice of the head coach upon its back like the crack of a whip. The boy who has made the team bounds like a deer, his heart a balloon within his breast.

Meanwhile, on the back-field, behind the stands, another coach is organizing a strong practise eleven—a sort of sublimated "Scrub." He takes the best of the regular Scrubs and two of the best freshmen; three "grads", historical veterans of bygone teams, volunteer and are enthusiastically accepted; and then this canny coach walks over to the side-lines and calls the displaced "star." The "star" leaps at the invitation and comes running to take his place. "I'll show them," is written in every line of his tense body, of his frowning face.

This strengthened Scrub team is given a hurried drill, and then it appears upon the main field in challenge of the 'Varsity. It kicks off. The boy who has made the team catches the ball and comes down the field like a race-horse till he is met by the solid bulk of an old veteran. The two teams then line up with lowered heads against each other. The quarter-back gives a shrill call, and suddenly the 'Varsity springs at the throat of the Scrub like an elastic and steel-sinewed tiger. The practise is on.

And then it goes on, and goes on, and goes on as though it were never to stop, till it seems incredible that those men can still stand upon their feet. The Scrub, with its reenforcement of big, cunning veterans, is very powerful; all of the strength and the resources of the 'Varsity are needed to cope with it. Back of its line the deposed "star" is working like a madman. Panting, sobbing, bleeding, he is "showing them." He heaves his whole body in each attack with a determination which is frenzy. During the short pauses of the play, his eyes wander sideways toward the coaches. But they do not see him; never does a glance reward him; they have sentenced him irrevocably. He hurls himself into the attack more fiercely, with despair. Out on the right wing of the 'Varsity, the boy who has made the team is playing with a sort of ecstasy, in an exultation which makes him achieve the marvelous; and the coaches, watching him, at times dig their elbows into each other's ribs and grunt their satisfaction.

The 'Varsity takes the ball. "Thump-a-thump-a-thump crash; thump-a-thump-a-thump crash," it goes, smashing into the Scrub like a battering-ram, a battering-ram possessed of a weird intelligence and constantly searching the Scrub line from end to end for its vulnerable point. At times, as if it were an octopus, it throws out like a tentacle a long forward pass which immediately springs back to itself again.

All this is in a heavy ambient silence. The gates are still closed, the stands are empty. The only sound comes from the teams—the sharp call of the quarter-back, the grinding of body against body, the hollow thump of the punted ball, the drumming of feet, and the crash of the charge driven home. It continues—fifteen, twenty, thirty, thirty-five minutes. The teams are called off and hurriedly sponged, fresh men are placed upon the Scrub—and then at it again!

The sun which was as a frozen fried egg is now a mere yellow phosphorescence. The phosphorescence disappears; the cold haze upon the field turns to a more opaque gray. From the far campus, suddenly, there comes a vague roar as from a surf upon a reef.

This sound nears; it becomes the growl of a mob, then abruptly rises into a song, a great male-voiced chorus. It approaches. The beating of a drum is heard, then a concerted yell, like a rattle of musketry—and the clamor is beating at the gates.

The gates are thrown open, and with beating drums, screaming fifes, the fifteen hundred men of the college, the "rooters," pour in. They march like an army, by fours, with heavy, cadenced tramp; along the column's flanks yell-leaders prance. At regular intervals these go through a violent and cabalistic pantomime which immediately draws from the marching men a concerted and rattling battle-cry.

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THE 'VARSITY TAKES THE BALL AND GOES SMASHING INTO THE SCRUB LIKE A BATTERING-RAM.

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A thrill passes along the spine of each of the twenty-two tired gladiators upon the field; their sagging bodies straighten, their eyes gleam. The College, their Cause, the Cause for which they are toiling and sweating, is there, concrete, live and vibrant, behind them; a new, proud strength goes through their veins like wine.

And the grinding work goes on. The marching "rooters" circle the field thrice, then mass upon the stands. Standing on the side-lines, the leaders throw their fists toward heaven in impassioned gesture, and in answer the "yell" comes tumbling down from tier to tier in a cataract of crashing sound.

But the men on the field hear nothing now; they have sunk back into the concentration of their toil as into a vacuum. The 'Varsity crashes into the Scrub; the Scrub crashes into the 'Varsity; the two teams oscillate heavily in the center of the field, vague in the gray haze, like two beasts of prehistoric birth suddenly emerged from unguessed sea-depths and fighting out here their age-long feud.

THE BOY WHO HAS MADE THE TEAM CATCHES THE BALL AND COMES DOWN THE FIELD LIKE A RACE-HORSE.

The gray fog darkens. The "rooters" upon the stands are singing in a gloaming now; into their voices, insensibly, the melancholy of twilight has crept. They are scarcely visible. Once in a while one of them lights his pipe, and the flare of his match is like a beacon-fire upon a mountain-side, far away. It is too dark to work now. A whistle blows. "All in!" shouts the head coach.

And the boy who has made the team walks with his mates slowly and saggingly to the club-house, and there, slowly and wearily, strips himself of his sodden armor; he hesitates a moment before the cold shower, then, with a decided movement, turns the faucet.

The icy douche hits his burning, aching body with a shock that goes to the marrow; then something cooling and soothing enters the marrow of his hot bones. He emerges, sparkling; about him other white, polished, liquidly-muscled bodies shine. He takes a big breath. "Gee!" he says, "but didn't we get it to-day!"

"Whee, but didn't we get it!" echoes another voice, enthusiastically.

And a third says: "Four days more."

They all stand motionless and silent a moment, contemplating the weary length of those last four days. They stretch before the men, long as centuries. Then, "Well, I guess we can stand it," says, with a smile, the boy who has made the team. He likes to say "we" when speaking of the team.

And he dresses and goes out, on his way to the Spartan dinner at the long table of the training house. It is night, now, outside. He can hear the steps of an invisible team-mate ahead of him, but he is alone in the darkness as he skirts the field. He stops abruptly and listens.

To his ears, from close at hand, there has come an unwonted sound—a soft rustling, such as is heard sometimes on passing a manger. And to his nostrils comes a sweet, bucolic smell of hay.

"Hay!" he exclaims, perplexed; "what the deuce——"

Oh, yes. He remembers now. Of course!

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The field is being covered with straw; invisible there in the darkness, men with pitchforks are spreading straw over the gridiron. They will do this every night from now on to protect it from the frost, to keep it in good condition for the coming Saturday, for the Big Game.

"The Big Game!"

The boy no longer hears the rustling, he senses no longer the sweetness of the hay. His eyes, staring ahead, are intent on a vision: in the center of the field, there, in the blackness, the vague loom of two teams, grappling.

His head snaps up, his nostrils distend, his fists clench. "By God!" he says.

This exclamation is not an oath; it is a praver.

Such is the Monday of the last week. And such also are the Tuesday and the Wednesday—cheerless days of great toil. Then, on Wednesday night, the team disappears.

The boys of the college in some way have got wind of this secret plan. They are all there at the station, massed in the drizzling darkness at the foot of a dormitory whose windows are flaming. 'Buses arrive; the men of the team, swaddled in their overcoats, spring out and climb aboard the waiting train.

They are visible for a short time, in profile against the coach windows. Their eyes are set straight ahead; for outside, in the darkness, the college is taking up the name of each one of them successively in a long cheer. Then a bell clangs, the locomotive shrieks, the train moves smoothly forward.

The fifteen hundred "rooters" are not shouting now; massed close and with bared heads they are singing the college anthem. Upon their young pates, from the black sky, there is falling a cold brown drizzle that seems Extinguishment materialized. It can't extinguish them, though; their grave male voices rise up against it in chords vibrant with hot and inextinguishable faith. They thrill. Ah, me—what it is to be young!

The green light at the tail of the train gives a last wink, and vanishes. The "rooters" disperse, and the town is left without its team. It is like a beleaguered city with its garrison out on a sortie. It feels lonely and lost.

Lonely—not for long. For now all the people of the world seem to be converging upon it and taking up quarters to see the Big Game. They come, these "visitors," like a cloud of Huns. They rout you out of your bedroom; they pillage your stores; they sleep, spread two deep, over every square foot of your house floor — your polished house floor. The inns are all full; on their lawns the automobiles stand parked like cannon.

Meanwhile the boy who has made the team is out in the country with his mates; on an old farm with a big hall and a big fireplace. He sleeps the night of his arrival with the rustle of a tree beneath his window.

And the next day there is no "line-up," no thumping and grinding toil—merely an amiable little trot of four or five miles behind the trainer (who is on a horse) across the crackling, frozen fields, a sharp hour of signal-practise, and a few minutes of catching punts. And the next day, which is the day before the game, nothing at all.

Nothing at all to do—but to consecrate himself. The boy who has made the team is now like the novice of the Middle Ages about to be knighted. The boy of the days of chivalry then, you remember, spent a night alone in a chapel, before a lamp on an altar. The boy who has made the team is not in a chapel. But, lounging on the porch in the clear sunlight, or in the hall before the glowing coals; or stretched upstairs on his narrow cot with eyes staring upward in the darkness, he is consecrating himself. Silently, ceaselessly, he is calling to himself all his resources of strength and courage and grit and devotion and sacrifice —for the morrow.

The morrow comes. After a breakfast which sticks in his throat, he climbs aboard a train with his team-mates. Arriving in the town, which is in the condition of Brussels before Waterloo, the team is whisked off secretly to the training house. The boy puts on his suit.

He puts it on slowly, with care, as a warrior dons his armor. At length he stands up, ready. His new clean jersey is warm upon his skin; his cleated shoes are tight about his ankles. He stretches his arms; he brings his knee up to his chin; he is fit.

The head coach calls the eleven into an inner room. He "gives them a talk."

The boy who has made the team hardly needs this exhortation. At the vibrant

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words his feelings almost overflow. His heart swells till it seems about to float away like a balloon, a dew-drop is at the end of one of his eyelashes, a glowing exaltation flows through his veins.

Shoulder to shoulder with his team-mates, he trots out upon the field. It looks small, the field, within its four walls of towering humanity. From those live walls comes a thunderous burst of sound which nearly throws the boy down with its concussion. Along the side-lines, on the other side, he catches a glimpse of flaming jerseys. The enemy! His teeth close grindingly.

But his team-mates are lining up, there across the center of the field, and on the other half of the gridiron eleven giants with flaming jerseys are spreading. The boy who has made the team takes his place at the right extremity of its long line. His heart is beating like a bell; his knees are striking each other. A whistle blows shrilly; there is the thump of a kicked ball.

And at that thump, the whole ambient world disappears to the boy—the stands, the sky, the roar of the multitude, his own panic—everything disappears. A vacuum seems to wrap itself about him, the vacuum of his own terrible concentration.

The boy is going to win.

THE RETURN TO THE TRAGEDIES

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

I close the pastoral page.
Here end the hours of woodland idleness;
Here ends the pleasaunce of some happier age
Where Music walked with Summer as of old,
And Love was not denied, and that distress
Which vexes earthlier lovers slept untold.
Here ends the idyl of the earlier page;
Here ends the Age of Gold.

To deeper things I turn.
Unto the failure of emprise, the fate
Mortality so tardily must learn,
The fallen crown, the goal achieved too late,
The uncertain shadows wherein to and fro
There stalks a veiléd ghost that will not rest,
The star-crossed passions, and the thrusts of hate,
The old immedicable human woe
Touched into peace, the pain that is not pain,
The Purpose wider than the paths we prest,
The sorrow rising out of sorrow slain—
Yea, Tragedy seems best!

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The PLAYERS

Photograph by Hall.

AUGUSTUS THOMAS AND JOHN MASON CONFERRING OVER ONE OF MR. THOMAS'S PLAYS.

OF THE very few American plays that ran successfully in New York from the early spring until the middle of the summer, and then, after a short vacation, were resumed successfully this fall, the sturdiest survivor is "As a Man Thinks," by Mr. Augustus Thomas. The success of this piece is very interesting to those who wonder about

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Photograph by White.

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, GEORGE FAWCETT, AND RUTH SHEPLEY IN A SCENE FROM "A GENTLEMAN OF LEISURE."

audiences. It is not a good play; but it enjoys the great advantage of having been written by a good playwright; and it has been carried to success mainly by the compelling power of the author's personality. In more than one sense of the word, Mr. Thomas is, at the present time, the leader of our American playwrights. Not only has he, since the death of Mr. Clyde Fitch, remained unrivaled by our other authors in technical dexterity; but he is the only one of all our playwrights who, consistently from play to play, has striven to set forth a representment of life informed by philosophy—who, in other words, has tried to make us look at life through a mind.

Mr. Thomas has served a long apprenticeship in the theatre. He began by writing popular melodramas labeled after many states; and in writing these he cultivated a natural gift for story-telling, an exact observation of innumerable phases of American character, and an easy grace of dialogue. There followed a middle period in his career, when he went to school to the fine artisans of France, and learned resiliency of structure and a deft, incisive brevity of style. There was a Gallic dexterity of manipulation in such a farce, for instance, as "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots," American as it was in subject-matter. In these many years of practise, Mr. Thomas developed what is,

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JULIA SANDERSON IN "THE SIREN."

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LEILA McINTYRE IN "THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS."

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HENRIETTA CROSMAN AND "THE KIDDIES" IN "THE REAL THING."

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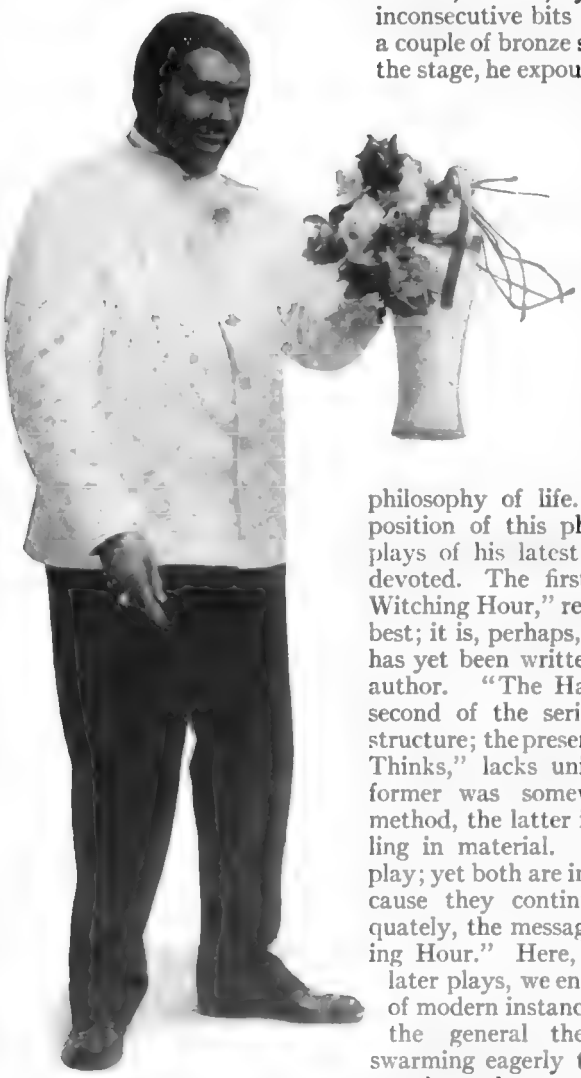
perhaps, the finest of his talents as an artist in the theatre—namely, the ability to convey concretely, by visual "business," an idea that is essentially abstract. Whenever he can tell his story by moving his characters about upon the stage or by manipulating physical properties, he withdraws the burden of narrative from his dialogue and expresses his meaning to the eye instead of to the ear. A striking instance of this process is revealed in the first act of "As a Man Thinks," where, by attracting several inconsecutive bits of conversation to a couple of bronze statuettes set up on the stage, he expounds the entire basis of his plot.



WILLIS SWEATNAM AS THE PORTER IN "EXCUSE ME."

But technical mastery is of little service in the theatre unless a man has something to say; and the important point about Mr. Augustus Thomas is that, all the while that he was mastering his means, he was also developing a philosophy of life. It is to an exposition of this philosophy that the plays of his latest period have been devoted. The first of these, "The Witching Hour," remains, till now, the best; it is, perhaps, the best play that has yet been written by an American author. "The Harvest Moon," the second of the series, lacks unity of structure; the present piece, "As a Man Thinks," lacks unity of theme; the former was somewhat fumbling in method, the latter is somewhat fumbling in material. Neither is a good play; yet both are important plays, because they continue, at least adequately, the message of "The Witching Hour." Here, then, in the two later plays, we encounter that rarest of modern instances, the spectacle of the general theatre-going public swarming eagerly to the plays of a certain author merely for the sake of what he has to say.

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Photograph by White.

ROSE STAHL AS *MAGGIE PEPPER* IN
THE PLAY OF THAT NAME.

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Mr. Thomas's vision of life is neither wide nor deep, but it is manly, wholesome, optimistic, and helpful. The essential tenet of his philosophy is a belief in what may be called the radio-activity of thought. He believes that any state of mind, held firmly, even though it does not translate itself into action or express itself in speech, will radiate an influence through the surrounding mental atmosphere, just as a wireless apparatus radiates intangible vibrations through the immaterial ether. He has carefully studied the operations of this principle in telepathy, mind-reading, hypnotism, the influence of mental environment upon the development of character, and the cure of nervous and hysterical diseases by mental means. Since he believes that thought has the virtue and to some extent the power of action, it becomes the first principle of his ethics that a man is morally responsible not only for his deeds but also for his states of mind.

Like all ethical principles which are indisputably true, this idea (which by so many is considered new and strange) is very old. It sits at the heart of a well-remembered sentence of Jesus concerning the sin of adultery. In modern centuries it has been formulated most completely in the ethics of Kant, wherein we are told that it is always in the motive, rather than the deed, that we must look for evidence of right or wrong. The idealist philosophy of Bishop Berkeley is also one of the sources of that belief in the subjective state of mind as the only sure reality in the perceptible universe which Mr. Thomas uses as the basis of his outlook upon life. These ideas Mr. Thomas has welcomed with a sane and smiling mind and is now engaged in propagating through the medium of his dramatic art.

They are dangerous ideas to deal with; because, if they be developed to illogical extremes, they tend to explode into absurdity. A sane belief, for instance, that a man, by curing his ill temper, can cure his indigestion, may be developed illogically to a denial of the existence of disease; and a sane belief that a man, by facing a loaded pistol with no fear, may cow a fluttering antagonist, may be developed illogically into a fancy that he can, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature. Yet Mr. Thomas moves among these dangerous ideas without any sacrifice of sanity. Though not an original, and hardly a constructive thinker, he is at least a sound exponent of those idealist ideas of mental science which recently have re-arisen to popularity. And though his message is neither so deep as the well of truth nor so wide as the church-door of revelation, it is a wholesome message; and his earnest effort to deliver it sets him head and shoulders higher than our other American playwrights of the present day, most of whom, apparently, have no message whatsoever.

"As a Man Thinks" tells two distinct stories, with which are intervolved many minor narrative materials; and at no point does the author seem to have determined precisely what his play is most about. It is therefore impossible for the critic to offer a coherent summary of the plot. The central figure, Dr. Seelig, is a middle-aged Jewish physician of humanistic mind, whose philosophic outlook upon life is coincident with the author's. His young daughter is engaged to marry a clever Jewish art critic named Benjamin De Lota, but is really in love with a rising young sculptor who is a Gentile. This complication affords Mr. Thomas an opportunity to discuss the status of the educated Jew in present-day New York society; but on this point he finds very little that is definite to say.

In urging his daughter to marry a man of her own people, Dr. Seelig embarks upon a rhetorical laudation of the Jews as the sole conservators throughout historic time of a belief in monotheism—a statement which is contrary to fact, since the dreaming millions of the Orient had developed a monotheistic belief long before the Semitic tribes first wandered into the light of legendary history. Dr. Seelig argues that his daughter would sacrifice this immemorial religious heritage if she should marry a Gentile; but Mr. Thomas fails to make it clear to the audience why, in marrying a person of another race, the girl should be required to alter her spiritual faith. Ultimately the girl's love triumphs over her father's religious prejudice, and she marries the young sculptor.

Her rejected suitor, De Lota, had formerly been in love with a certain Mrs. Clayton, whose husband is inclined to drift into intrigues with other women. After one or two wayside rambles apart from the straight and narrow road of matrimony, Clayton has returned penitent, and has been forgiven by his wife. But her resentment grows upon her until, as an impetuous assertion of her independence, she accepts an invitation from De Lota to pay a clandestine visit to his

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rooms. She remains innocent of wrong-doing; but her husband, discovering the visit, believes the worst.

Mrs. Clayton, ejected by her husband, is harbored by the Seeligs. Her statement that her own impetuous and innocent revolt was warranted by her husband's infidelities is controverted by Dr. Seelig in a lecture which sets forth the familiar physiological and sociological arguments that are advanced to justify the so-called double standard of morality. Clayton, nursing his harrowing doubt, angers himself into a physical illness. Dr. Seelig, in his capacity as physician, undertakes to cure his body by allaying the irritation of his mind. By a clever and daring bit of strategy, he convinces Clayton of the innocence of his wife; and the patient forgets his illness in a rushing recurrence of penitence and kindliness.

The impression produced by this exceedingly intricate plot is plural instead of single. No unifying theme emerges as the informing principle of all these heterogeneous narrative materials. Mr. Thomas, in this piece, seems in the sad case of a person who has too much to say and tries to say it all at once. Yet his many philosophic comments on the intricate drift of incidents are interesting and valuable. In minor technical details the play is also admirable as a work of art; innumerable bits of clever strategy remind us that the author is a master of the stage. The characters are humanly and clearly drawn; and the dialogue dashes along with the incisive inconsecutiveness of actual conversation.

Mr. Thomas has been greatly aided in conveying his ideas by that dignified and earnest actor, Mr. John Mason, who, in the difficult rôle of the author's mouthpiece, produces, with finished art, an illusion that the thoughts he is expressing are his own.

"EXCUSE ME"

The Overland Limited Express train which Mr. Rupert Hughes set upon the stage last spring is still running regularly and carrying many theatre-goers to a land of laughter. "Excuse Me" is so clever a farce that its title must not be taken as an apology for its existence; for even Emerson would have agreed that merriment, like beauty, is its own excuse for being. The merriment in this piece is derived mainly from the novel and clever device of setting the entire story in a railway train traveling from Chicago to Reno. The first and last acts take place in a sleeping-car; and the intervening act is set in a combination car, with a writing-room and parlor at one end and a bar and smoking-room at the other. No less than two dozen characters are crowded into this constricted setting; and the task of rehearsing so many people in so small a space has been accomplished with extraordinary skill by that masterly stage-director, Mr. George Marion. The most amusing of the many human types that are depicted is the Pullman porter, played with fine insight into negro character by Mr. Willis Sweatnam. The many strands of comic narrative which are interwoven into the complicated plot are spun along briskly by the author; and the dialogue is brightened by a wit that is always adequate to the occasion.

"THE REAL THING"

Marriage is so serious a matter that it will not do to take it too seriously:—this, apparently, is the message of "The Real Thing," a first play by Catharine Chisholm Cushing, which serves to display the talent of that accomplished comedienne, Miss Henrietta Crosman. Before her marriage Kate Grayson had been a tennis champion and had delighted in the many light activities of youth; indeed, it was by her brilliancy and dash that she had won her husband. But since her marriage she has allowed her vigorous and playful spirit to be overlaid by a voluntary slavery to her children. She has become an excellent housekeeper and an admirable mother, but, in doing so, she has ceased to be a "good pal" to her husband. Consequently, he plays tennis with a young, athletic girl who lives next door, and takes her about to parties which his wife deems herself too busy to attend. His longing for companionship leads him to an emotional overestimate of this secondary intimacy, and he is on the point of making love to the young girl—when his sister-in-law appears upon a visit to his wife.

The newcomer, Jess Lorraine (played by Miss Crosman) is a merry widow, very wise in the ways of the world. She takes in the situation at a glance, and is not surprised when she discovers Grayson in the act of kissing the girl next door. Jess packs her brother-in-law off for a vacation; and during his absence manages to jolt her sister into a realization that after a wife has won her hus-

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band's love she must still exert herself to keep it. The colorless little housekeeper spruces up once more, and gets into practise for the tennis tournament; and when her husband returns, she wins him back completely by her recovered sprightliness.

The material of this comedy is amiably commonplace, and its setting forth is overobvious and amateurish. We have heard all this a dozen times before—and heard it better told. Yet the story remains sufficiently human to awaken sympathetic laughter. The dialogue is written not so much with humor as with good humor; it is not brilliant, but it is at least ingratiating; and it is plentifully—a little too plentifully, perhaps—enriched with sentiment.

"A GENTLEMAN OF LEISURE"

The bland and jocular personality of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks is agreeably displayed in a fairly interesting play of plot, entitled "A Gentleman of Leisure," by Mr. John Stapleton and Mr. P. G. Wodehouse. Bobby Pitt (played by Mr. Fairbanks) is very wealthy; but he has returned home in the second cabin of the *Lusitania* because he was bored at the thought of the high life amidships. Traveling in the first cabin was a girl upon whom he gazed with growing fondness every day; and the girl returned his gaze in a manner that need not necessarily be deemed discouraging. But Bobby has been unable to discover the identity of this girl. It is one of the hero's characteristics that he is never able to refuse a bet and is never daunted by a dare. At a dinner in his rooms, a friend of his bets him that he can not break into a house and get away again without being caught as a burglar; and Bobby takes him up.

Immediately after the dinner, a professional burglar breaks into his rooms. Bobby overpowers him; and, persuading him that he (Bobby himself) is a high-class "scientific" burglar from abroad, offers to join him in robbing a house up-town. The professional, whose *nom de guerre* is Spike, has been tipped off, by a treacherous pal who has a grudge against him, that a certain house in Riverside Drive is easy picking. Thither the two repair, and break into the house. They are held up, at a pistol's point, by the very girl of the *Lusitania* for whom Bobby has been languishing. Bobby, in evening dress, persuades her that Spike is his valet, and that the two have entered the house in pursuit of a burglar who has apparently escaped.

Thereupon enters the girl's father, who turns out to be Big Phil Creedon, who (by means of the horticultural process known as grafting) has accumulated a large fortune as deputy commissioner of police. Big Phil is familiar with the face of Spike, which evidently decorates the Rogues' Gallery; and after Phil has sent his daughter from the room, Spike explains that Bobby is an expert robber from abroad, and secures immunity for both by suggesting that Bobby may be tapped for a large bribe.

The third act passes at a country estate on Long Island, where certain British aristocrats—they are neither British nor aristocratic in the presentation—are trying to lure the daughter of Big Phil to marry an Effete Scion of an Ancient Noble Family—one must use a conventional phrase to describe a conventional puppet of the theatre. Here Bobby is visiting, with Spike as his valet. Big Phil, coming down to see his daughter, forbids her to hold any further intercourse with Bobby, who, he explains, is a notorious thief. The heroine still believes in the hero; but her faith is shaken when the hostess loses a costly string of pearls—for what is a play of plot without a necklace?—and she discovers the jewels in the possession of Bobby, to whom they have been passed by Spike, who, contrary to orders, has reverted to type and stolen them. But in the last act the misunderstanding is cleared up; the jewels are returned, and—would you believe it?—the romance of the *Lusitania* is concluded by a wedding.

Considerable narrative ability is displayed in the setting forth of these familiar ingredients; and the dialogue is sufficiently clever to maintain in the spectator a pleasant mood of make-believe. The play is no more ambitious than the average "best seller;" but it adequately fulfils the purpose for which it was devised.

"MAGGIE PEPPER"

"The Chorus Lady" has become a Shop Lady; and instead of talking the slang of the stage-door, Miss Rose Stahl now talks what may be described as shop-talk. As Maggie Pepper, in Mr. Charles Klein's story-bookish drama of that name, she appears as an employee in a large department store.

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The business of Holbrook & Co. has been running down, owing to the antiquated methods of the manager and also to the fact that young Joe Holbrook has been more interested in spending a fortune abroad than in making one at home. Maggie, who began her career as a cash-girl and who has served the firm for fifteen years, is a keen-minded saleslady. When Joe Holbrook comes home, and is drifting around the store preparatory to getting on the job, he runs across Maggie, working at her desk in the stock-room. Not knowing who he is, she calls him down for smoking and for wearing snobbish London clothes, and then rambles on in witty criticism of the methods of the manager and offers several sage suggestions about building up the business.

When she discovers that she has been saying all this to the young proprietor, Maggie pins her hat on, deeming her position to be lost. Instead, she is promoted by Joe Holbrook, and is made his confidential adviser in the innovations that he institutes. Under the guidance of Maggie's sage and witty mind, the business is built up to a new prosperity. Thereby she awakens the antagonism of the manager, to whose daughter Holbrook is engaged to be married. The manager forces Maggie to resign by propagating scandalous talk concerning her intimacy with Holbrook. The latter, flushed with excitement and a quart of champagne, which he has drunk somewhat precipitously at dinner, asks Maggie to marry him and is good-humoredly refused. But later on, the saleslady heroine, convinced of the reality of Holbrook's love for her, yields to the lure of happiness-ever-after for both herself and the department store, and marries him.

Like all of Mr. Klein's plays, "Maggie Pepper" is artificial and mechanical, and shows only a superficial similitude to life. Like all his plays, also, it is clever in theatric artifice and interesting in narrative invention. Mr. Klein is a good story-teller, even if his stories frequently o'erstep the modesty of nature and belie the laws of life. The central figure of the present piece is sufficiently real to allow Miss Stahl an opportunity for composing a convincing characterization; and several of the minor figures afford the performers opportunities to act. There are many clever lines; and the star, in reading them, exercises her fine talent for the quiet rendering of sentiment and drollery. The piece is a good popular entertainment.

"THE SIREN"

The twinkling feet of Mr. Donald Brian now dance among the stars; and together with Miss Julia Sanderson (for whom one would have to ransack a florist's shop in the springtime of the year to find a fitting simile), he has waltzed his way to popularity in "The Siren," a musical comedy rendered into English by Mr. Harry B. Smith from the book of Leo Stein and A. M. Wullner, and composed by Leo Fall. The music sounds a little thin after that of the more tuneful "Dollar Princess;" but the scenery is picturesque, the costumes are colorful, and the text possesses the rather unusual merit of telling a coherent story.

The scene is in Vienna. The young Marquis de Ravaillac (played by Mr. Brian) is suspected of having written certain witty and scurrilous verses satirizing the sovereign, which have been circulated about the court in manuscript. In order to obtain irrefutable evidence against him, it is necessary for the minister of police to secure some specimen of his handwriting. To this end, the minister engages some dozen of the prettiest women in Vienna and enrolls them as a secret corps of sirens—their duty being to make love to the marquis and lure him into writing love-notes to them. The marquis, who is a great lady-killer, wins all their hearts without losing his own; and, feigning an injury to his right hand, repels their attempts to secure evidence against him. There comes up from the country a lovely little rural cousin of the minister, Lolotte (played by Miss Sanderson), who has run away from home; and to her the marquis, proof against the flower of fluttering urban loveliness, succumbs.

Unwittingly she serves as a siren; and, without understanding in advance the effect of what she does, she secures from the marquis a poem in his autograph. The marquis is condemned to exile, and casts Lolotte away from him as a traitor. The final act reveals the expected reconciliation between them, and the two are driven away in an old stage-coach to a comic-opera bliss. There is a good deal of humorous business strung along this strand of plot; there are some fairly catchy songs; but it is the incidental dancing that most entertains the drifting mind at the performance and that recurs most smilingly to the reverted memory.

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Mrs. UNCLE SAM

By WILLIAM HARD

IN 1862 the United States established a Department of Agriculture. There is just one employment more basic than agriculture. That employment ought not to lag more than half a century behind agriculture in national interest. In 1912 the best celebration of the semi-centennial of the Department of Agriculture would be to establish a federal Bureau of Household Arts.

The work of such a bureau would be to provide a collecting and distributing center for the scattered but enormous quantities of information now being produced by schools and universities and laboratories with regard to the right feeding, the right clothing, the right housing, and, in general, the right care of human beings. It would devote itself to all those particulars in which the lives of people, especially of children, are governed by the housewife.

It would therefore make inquiries into the selection and preparation of foods, from the standpoint both of nutritive value and of money-cost; and, incidentally, it would disseminate in popular form the pure-food findings of the Bureau of Chemistry. It would study human hygiene, including in that term not only rules of right living for the individual, but the maintenance of a sanitary environment for him. Ventilation, drainage, refuse-disposal, would come within its field. It would thus be the equivalent, in large part, of a Department of Health. Further, it would study the physical and mental development and education of the child and would thus be the equivalent, in large part, of the Children's Bureau proposed by many social workers.

The scope of a federal Bureau of Household Arts would therefore be *The Care of the Human Family.*

The appearance of such a bureau is not conjured up out of the empty cabinet of sentiment. It is a solider prospect than that. *It is the almost predictable outcome of events precisely parallel to those which led up to the federal Department of Agriculture.*

For countless centuries plants and animals and human beings were all cared for by methods transmitted personally from father to son and from mother to daughter. We have seen the nurture of plants and animals—farming—pass from being a provincial enterprise into being a world-enterprise on which all the applicable knowledges of all the known world are made to play. We are now seeing the nurture of human beings—housekeeping—make that same passage.

We can go to-day to the home-economics short-course class-room of any one of a large number of universities and see the amphitheatre before us filled with mature, home-making women, from farmhouse and from flat building, assembled for a week, for two weeks, to study, in the light of the knowledges of the world, the nurture—the feeding, clothing, housing, and educating—of their families. You can see that light on their faces. It means an age when the housekeeping woman must live mentally not only in her house but in the world.

Agriculture took its first step forward into the new age when it was insinuated into the educational system as a "fad." There was a professorship of "natural history, chemistry, *and agriculture*" at Columbia College, in New York, in 1792. But for many decades it was a witticism to say that John had been sent to school to learn how to pick a bug off a potato-vine. This witticism was paralleled in due course of time by those who said that Mary had been sent to school to learn how to boil an egg. It was not till 1857, in Michigan, at Lansing, that belief in the value of the real *study* of the nurture of plants and animals became vital enough to produce our first state agri-

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cultural college. A corresponding date in the development of the real *study* of the nurture of human beings will be found in the year 1909, when Columbia University dedicated a completely-equipped large building to Household Arts exclusively.

The second stage toward the establishment of the Department of Agriculture was traveled almost simultaneously with the first. While Agriculture was penetrating Education, it was itself being penetrated by Science. Chemistry, physics, bacteriology were made to yield their agricultural applications; and, while the farmer could not have the opportunity to become a professional scientist, he now had the opportunity to gain a *scientific outlook* on his work.

The parallel stage in the movement toward a Bureau of Household Arts can be seen to-day in hundreds of educational institutions, from Simmons College in Boston to the California Polytechnic at San Luis Obispo, from the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks to the Louisiana State Normal School at Natchitoches. It's not only that housekeeping is being taught in almost all schools and colleges in which women are pupils—it's more than that. Original research work in the laboratories of those schools and colleges is making chemistry and physics and bacteriology yield their practical applications to diet, sanitation, and personal health. The pioneers who gave a scientific outlook to the farmer in his dealings with plant and animal life have found successors in the pioneers who are giving the housekeeper a scientific outlook in her dealings with human life.

The third and final stage takes us to Washington. For Agriculture it began with a distribution of seeds by the Commissioner of Patents in 1836, and lasted twenty-six years, during which, while there was no Department of Agriculture, the Government did agricultural work in departments organized for other purposes. Similarly, to-day, the Government, while not professing it, does Household Arts work.

In the office of Experiment Stations of the Department of Agriculture, the Government has been doing Household Arts work (in its inquiries into human nutrition) for twenty-four years. It has issued, resulting from those inquiries, sixty "technical" and thirty-five "popular" bulletins which have reached a combined total of many million copies. In the "popular" bulletins the United States of America has spoken directly to the housewife. It has discussed general household conditions with her in such bulletins as "The Care of Food in The Home." It has discussed variety in diet with her in such bulletins as "Nuts and their Uses." It has discussed nutritive values with her in such bulletins as "Fish as Food." It has discussed technical methods with her in such bulletins as "Bread and Bread-Making." Finally, it has caused the office of Experiment Stations to go outside the subject of nutrition and to study drainage, house-construction, household labor-saving devices, the disposal of garbage, ventilation, and sanitation, and to print bulletins like "Modern Conveniences for the Farm Home."

In the threescore agricultural experiment-stations annually appropriated for by the federal Government, we have a series of laboratories where studies of the lower forms of life can readily be carried forward into studies of man. As for the need of such studies——

At the Child Welfare Exhibit in Chicago a toy scythesman struck down each fourth little white-robed figure in a perpetual circular procession of baby-dolls to indicate that in Chicago only three infants in four live to be more than infants.

The fight against infant mortality would have its principal base in the Bureau of Household Arts. The government experiment-stations would be enlarged to include, along with inquiries into the care of calves, inquiries into the care of children.

The Government is ready. The country is ready. Every day brings confirming news. It is that 10,000 enrolments have now been recorded in the correspondence courses of the American School of Home Economics in Chicago. Or it is that Utah has by law required its State Farmers' Institutes to give instruction in home economics.

All necessary preliminary stages in the history of the study of the nurture of human beings have now been lived through. *The Household, following the Farm, has moved out of its isolation into the community.* And if the community, the nation, does not welcome the Household into its organized national life as, at the precisely corresponding moment, it welcomed the Farm, there may arise some reason to feel that this government, besides not being a government *by* both sexes, is not a government *for* both.

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WANTED—ONE ROMANCE

BY · PHILIP · CURTISS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. MOWAT

"AND so we settled in the little vine-clad cottage, far from the noise and strife of the bustling world."

Carved on my memory, like an inscription, this one sentence is all that remains to me of a life that was never lived and a story that was never told.

It is a curious passion of men to aspire in some direction for which they are absolutely unfitted by nature. Your stock-broker, apparently, cares little for his reputation in "the Street," but wishes to appear in the illustrated magazines as the champion golf-player of the world. Your greens-keeper neglects his links for the world of finance and falls into the clutches of the green-goods man. Your politician lets the national convention sink into oblivion in order that he may figure, in his mind's eye, as one of America's greatest cattle-breeders. And your cattle-breeder throws away three generations of blooded Holsteins in order to become a minor politician. Walter Scott in the financial world, Banker Newcome posing as an agriculturist, and James J. Corbett interpreting the dramatic authors, are conspicuous illustrations which history furnishes us of this singular fatality of mankind.

Personally, my great ambition has been to write a love story; not a big, stirring romance with rescues and exploits, but a quiet little, midsummer, sit-in-the-hammock love story in which the only incident of moment would be the fact that I wrote it. I wanted to "play upon the emotions," to "paint a delicious word picture," so that people would read it, lay it down, gaze into space with tears in their eyes, and say, "How true that is! What a charming little tale!"

To be sure, I am absolutely unfitted by heredity and environment to accomplish such a feat. My mother was born during

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the siege of Vicksburg. My father, who was much older, had been an ardent accomplice of John Brown, but had been expelled from his raids as being too scatter-brained and foolhardy. My home life terminated at the age of nine, when a cyclone seized upon the house in which we were living in Kansas, capsized it, and killed both my father and mother. My own life was spared because I was thrown into the well and trod water until the excitement had blown over. I then went to live with an uncle who was an inventor of high explosives and who, nine years later, came to an untimely end by falling out of his high four-poster bed and breaking his neck. Thrown on my own resources, I became a criminal reporter and continued thus until the time at which my story opens.

Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that I should aspire to be a depicter of suburban life and a writer of love stories. It had been my constant dream from childhood. I remember, when I was treading water in the well, I wondered whether I should ever grow up to be a big, strong man with three cows, a pig, and a whole hennery full of fluffy little chickens. Now that I look back upon it, I see that I had some grounds for wonder.

As I rounded into manhood, my ambition steadily increased. I devoured William Dean Howells page by page until more mature taste led me to the stories of Gouverneur Morris. My only periodicals were *Country Life in the United States* and *The Complete Suburbanite*. My text-book was "A Woman's Hardy Garden." Very early in the game, I began, also, to pen my own sketches. My one rule was always to make them absolutely devoid of plot and to put my whole efforts into "style." "The History of the Seedling Turnip," "Love in a Steamer Chair," and "My Wife and I," were fair examples of the titles. The sketches usually began somewhat after this fashion:

"The whole trouble started when Gyp, the dog, decided to kill the woodchuck," and ended, "'But nothing matters, after all,' said my wife, 'as long as I have you, dear,' and I caught the little woman into my arms and crushed her to me."

"My wife" figured in almost all of these tales—a most delicious little person and quite unlike anything that ever was on land or sea; for, as a matter of fact, I had probably known three real wives in my life, and for six months at a time, the only women with whom I spoke, were my landlady and those whom I bailed out at the police court in spontaneous pity.

The success I had with these sketches it is easy to figure. I soon collected one of the most complete aggregations of rejection slips known to publishing. After I had been at it for three or four years, one editor, out of sheer pity, wrote me a personal letter and advised me not to get discouraged, at which I redoubled my efforts, and "my wife" was obliged to do duty nights as well as days, in complete violation of the labor laws for employment of women in exhausting occupations. That letter was probably the most conspicuous example of misdirected charity in the history of almonry. In the meantime I was earning forty dollars a week as a criminal reporter, and the managing editor said that my account of the Willoughby murder was a classic; he even ordered a large number of proofs struck off for the guidance of the younger reporters.

After nine years (I run in nines) of complete failure as a writer of rustic gems, I was wise enough to pause and look about me. Not that I had any intention of quitting. In fact, one of my most constant text-books was the biography of a famous short-story writer, who had had forty-seven manuscripts rejected before a single one appeared in print. I had had a hundred and ninety rejected, but I reasoned that, if a cat could look at a king, a puppy might get an occasional look at a princelet, and that if the famous writer had reached glory in his forty-eighth story, I might begin to look for the outskirts of fame about the two hundred and first.

I did have the sense, however, to reason that something must be wrong with my methods; and, odd as it may seem, I struck on the pith of the matter at the first guess.

"Montgomery Maximilian Walker," I said to myself—as if they could not handicap me with enough eccentricities, my parents had given me this absurd nomenclature—"Montgomery Maximilian Walker, the trouble with you is that you can not hope to describe life until you have seen it; and regarding the facts of life as people wish to read about them you are as ignorant as the new-born babe. Just look at your existence—for you can not call it anything else. For the past nine years, you have lived among murderers, crooks, Pinkerton agents, yeggmen, and second-story workers. You have breathed nothing save the atmosphere of

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battle, murder, and sudden death. How, pray tell, can you hope to write a real romance out of that material?"

The force of my arguments was enough to convince me, and I resolved at once on heroic treatment. First of all, I threw up my job.

I next rented the vine-clad cottage in the country to which I have referred in the opening sentence. This was an exceedingly simple procedure; for I had known by heart the real estate advertisements in the back of *Country Life* for the last dozen numbers. Then with bag and baggage, I set out to begin the life of a country gentleman.

The cottage was simply a dream, and I really wonder how I ever happened to strike anything so delightfully restful. It had been built by a rich landowner, who lived in it while he was completing the great mansion near by; and, although of the most diminutive proportions, the little house was perfect in every detail. It was a most auspicious beginning for my rural life, for in the stories on which I founded my experiment the hero and wife always landed on "just the thing" comparatively early in the chapter.

Eventually I intended to cook dainty little dishes for myself over a chafing-dish, as they did in "A Modern Gypsy;" but, as I discovered when I unpacked my goods and chattels, I had not made a single preparation for such a minor detail as eating. So I decided, for the first few weeks, to get my meals at a lunch-counter in the village. It never occurred to me, from my inexperience, that people ever ate at other places than lunch-counters.

The details of my first week, the establishment of my household, the planning of the garden, and the construction of the chicken yard, I will spare the reader. They occupy seven chapters in the story which was never written—a chapter for each day, including Sunday. I will skip, at once, to the beginning of my literary labors.

These began on Monday evening of the second week, when I sat down in real earnest for the composition of my first prose pastoral—written on the grounds, by our special correspondent. The planning had been done, day by day, during the delicious moments of my first week, and all was ready except the actual penmanship. I longed hungrily for my typewriter; but I decided that I could never give the true flavor except with a good old-fashioned pen—a quill pen from my own goose, if possible. And so I forewent (from the verb "forego") the accustomed ease of my universal keyboard.

With trembling fingers I wrote the first sentence exactly as I had planned it: "And so we settled in the little vine-clad cottage, far from the noise and strife of the bustling world."

Here I paused and threw my arm over the back of my chair in artistic nonchalance, to enjoy the luxury of my esthetic dreams. At my left glowed the soft light of a student lamp, and around me hung the misty haze of smoke from a pipe which I had learned to substitute for cigarettes in preparation for country life in the suburbs.

Wrapt in the delight of dreams, I gazed with satisfaction at my own artistic image in an antique mirror which I had purchased, with householding glee, and gloried in the flannel-shirted creature that the glass returned to me. Then softly, gradually, as if coming in a dream, I saw another figure creep into the mirror. Looking more carefully, I beheld a face covered by a black mask, and a hand holding a pistol at my head. This was too much like real life to be part of my dream, and I started in temporary annoyance.

"Oh, for Pete's sake, get out of here!" was what I said. And I am sure that any true lover of romance who has felt the endless vexation of having commonplaces from the every-day world intrude themselves on his colored dreams, will sympathize with the annoyance I felt.

But, as always, the commonplace insisted on intruding, and a gruff voice exclaimed:

"Throw up your dukes!"

"Oh, piffle!" I replied, not willing to give the intruder the satisfaction of having me look around, but thoroughly upset in my dreaming. I even gave a sigh and bestirred myself to resume my writing; but the visitor remained inflexible.

"T'ree minutes and I'll blow your head off," he grumbled and, at that, even I lost my temper.

I grabbed a heavy, brass-covered inkstand, whirled it in front of my face, and let it fly full at the visitor. I could tell by the sound of his head hitting the floor that he was down and out; so, without looking around, I went on with my story.

But the train of thought was broken, and not a bucolic word could I utter, though I continued to try; principally because I was

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I COULD TELL BY THE SOUND OF HIS HEAD HITTING THE FLOOR THAT HE WAS DOWN AND OUT; SO WITHOUT LOOKING AROUND, I WENT ON WITH MY STORY.

so exasperated at the intruder that I did not wish to give him the unconscious satisfaction of being looked after. Finally, however, unable to find a single artistic sentence for my narrative, I got up with a sigh and went to have a look at the figure lying prone on the floor, while the ink-bottle trickled a black stream over my nice new matting. First of all, I wiped this up and tried to get the stains out with lemon-juice, but I could not remove all the traces and, at last, I stopped to examine the burglar.

He was a tall, thin man, and his face was now entirely covered with black, partly by the mask and partly by the ink. As I worked, there came back to me a certain professional curiosity to know who he was, so I ripped off the mask and started to wipe his face with cold water. At the touch of the latter, he slowly revived and began to blink his eyes sleepily, while, at the same time, a gleam of recognition shot from both of us.

"Why, Tommy Hannifan!" I exclaimed, as I wiped the ink from his bristly chin, "what in the world are you doing here?".

"That you, Max?" he queried, in lazy reassurance. "I'm awfully sorry. If I had known it was you, I would never have interrupted."

"That's all right," I replied, willing to be as magnanimous as he was. "Get up and have a drink."

He did so speedily, and, as he was not much hurt, he was soon sitting cozily sipping brandy beside me.

Tommy Hannifan, I must explain, was an old friend of mine. We had been boys together when I was in the public school, while living with my uncle. In the seventh grade we had parted, I going to a military academy and he going to the reform school. Later I had taken to newspaper work and he had gone into burglary, so the nature of our professions had brought us frequently together. Indeed, when I was off hours and he was out of jail, we frequently met in the rooms back of Ed McConnell's, talked over old times, and, boy-like, confided our plans for the future. I recognized, with no sting of envy, that Tommy had come nearer to realizing his dreams than I had; but then he

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I CLAMBERED THROUGH THE WINDOW AND TRIED TO LOCATE THE YOUNG LADY'S ROOM BY THE SOUND OF HER SHRIEKS.

had gone about his work more systematically.

Content to begin in a small way, he had hung around the pool-rooms until he saw an opportunity to open a "lemon-squeeze" game. From this, he had gone into flim-flamming, then into second-story work, and had finally arrived at full-fledged burglaring, where his genius had received instant recognition from the police of half a dozen cities. I had not seen him since the last time he was sent to Wethersfield for working the old "envelope game," and I naturally hailed the opportunity to renew our acquaintance.

He, in turn, listened with interest to the description of my new life and said that he was sorry he had been the cause of staining the matting. He even examined the spot and said that he thought he could take it out with a kind of acid he used for blowing safes.

We had such a cozy, homelike little chat that it was one o'clock before we were aware of the passage of time, and, as I could not think of letting him go out on such a dark night, I invited him to stay until morning, which he did, nothing loath. He was delighted at the pretty little bedroom to which I showed him and said that he never broke into a room like that without wanting to sleep in it. He was already saving his money to buy a road-house. So, after showing him how to work the catches on the windows and how to unlock the bathroom door, I left him and went to sleep, with a happier feeling than I had had since my arrival.

In the morning, this feeling continued. Tommy was up betimes. He said he had always been a light sleeper, and when I came down he had lighted the fire in the kitchen stove, and, not aware of the fact that I took my meals elsewhere, he had walked to the village, broken into the grocery store, and taken a box of oatmeal, which he was busily cooking for breakfast. I never felt more deliciously the master of my house than I did that morning over the table. Tommy examined the spoons critically and said that he knew where he could get some prettier ones, which he would be glad to send me. The trouble, he said, would be to find initials the same as mine.

Tommy's visit did not end that day, nor the next. It was one of those sojourns which prolong themselves indefinitely, with equal pleasure for the visitor and the host. To my delight, he fell at once under the spell of rural simplicity, and a more domestic pair of chicks it would have been hard to

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find. In the matters of the household, moreover, he was an incomparable help. He explored the house from top to bottom, and disclosed the existence of cupboards and wall-chests of which I had never dreamed. It took a man like him to show me the possibilities of my own residence.

I ate no more at the lunch-counter, for Tommy was an excellent cook, having once served in the kitchen gang in New Jersey. But after that first breakfast I had to forbid his breaking into the grocery store, as I intended to live in the village indefinitely. He was somewhat unwilling to agree, as he said it was so easy that one could hardly call it breaking and entering. Finally, however, I found a way to stop him, by appealing to his sense of honor and pointing out that, as the grocery store was so foolishly easy of entrance, it was unsportsmanlike in an accomplished cracksman to do it. To this he agreed, and added that it was possibly just as well.

"For," he explained, "you can simply run up a bill and, when you are ready, skip out of town. I never did that myself, but you have got more education than I have." He said this with a pathetic look in his eyes which made my heart go out to the poor fellow.

My literary work, however, was at a standstill; for, during the long evenings, Tommy and I used to sit in front of the fire and talk until midnight of former times and former acquaintances—of our school-days; of life in the reform school; and of men we had both known in the saloon business. One night, indeed, I took up my pen with the fierce determination to finish my story, but something in my attitude reminded Tommy of a time-keeper whom he had laid out with a hammer while breaking away from Sing Sing, and I slothfully put aside my work to hear him muse dreamily about it by the fireside. All of which was showing me, more and more, that a quiet little home-life offered a terrible temptation to a literary man.

But it was all so happy, so peaceful, that I knew it could not last; and, surely enough, Tommy began, in time, to show signs of restlessness.

"This is all right for you," he would say, "because you are working at your trade. But time is flying for me and I must get on in life."

I saw that it would be unfair to detain him, and reluctantly he made preparations for his departure. On the night when he had disturbed me, he had previously explained, he had intended breaking into the big mansion which stood next to my cottage. Supposing that a coachman or watchman lived in the gate-house, he had dropped in to put him out of business before proceeding; and he now intended to finish the job before going back to the city and taking up his regular winter's work. He added that he might be near me for some time, as, in our delightful autumn walks, he had remarked a number of other large country places and suggested that they might stand looking into.

I was glad to hear that he was to be in the neighborhood for a time longer. So enjoyable had been his visit that I offered to let him board with me while he was finishing up; but he refused, saying that in his line he found it more convenient not to live near his work. I did not press the question; for, to tell the truth, my conscience was urging me to work on my rural drama.

The same day Tommy left me; and a day or two later I was more than gratified to receive a bread-and-butter letter. He said that he had taken a job with a plumber in a neighboring town, in order to get the tools, and added in a postscript that he was already looking for my spoons.

A day or two after the letter came, I was taking a walk around the grounds about two o'clock in the morning. I had worked feverishly all that evening and had succeeded in wiping all semblance of plot out of my story. I had a number of tentative paragraphs all written and could begin the actual work of putting them together in the morning. Leaning quietly against a tree and blowing great clouds of smoke into the darkness, I felt, at last, the real satisfaction of a man who was actually living.

Suddenly there came from the darkness the piercing shriek of a woman, and I snorted with disgust. If there is one thing that bores me it is a woman who shrieks at night. It is bad enough in the daytime, but at night, in the country, people want to be quiet. I started to return to my house, my evening now thoroughly spoiled, when again the shriek grated out—a most unwelcome reminder of the life I had hoped to escape. I paused and cursed the woman who had the bad taste to shriek on such a perfect night; but the shrieks continued, growing

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faster and faster until, in sheer self-defense, I started to locate them.

Stopping to get the direction, I found that they were coming from the big house and, after filling and lighting my pipe again, I started toward them. Louder and louder they came, becoming clearer and clearer as I approached them. As I showed, early in my story, I have a quick temper when roused, and I am sorry to say that I now lost it completely. Execrating the woman from the bottom of my heart, I broke into a run and speedily came in sight of the big house, where, at first glance, I saw a woman in white, waving her arms and shrieking from a window in the second story.

"What's the matter?" I called between puffs, because during the run my pipe had gone out and I had to stop to relight it.

Either she did not hear me or she was too excited to answer, for she kept on shrieking and waving her arms, while her hair fell over her shoulders in a manner that was simply disgraceful.

Seeing, at last, that I could get nothing out of her from where I stood, I went toward the house, and, seeking entrance, found that a window on the first story was wide open. I clambered through it and, locating the young lady's room by the sound of the shrieks, I came to a closed door on the second floor, where I controlled myself enough to knock politely. There was no answer except the high C's to which I had been listening for ten minutes past, so I put my shoulder to the door and broke it open.

The girl by the window started as I entered, and then, rushing forward, threw her arms around my neck and broke into hysterical sobbing. I tried to soothe her by patting her on the back and saying foolishly, "That's all right, old man." But she only sobbed more than ever, and I studied her as closely as I could, considering the perspective. She had light hair, whole masses of it, so much that I wondered what she did with it in the daytime. I couldn't see her eyes, because they were buried in my shoulder, but I judged that they must be large, because no small eyes could have done such an everlasting amount of crying. In the midst of her sobs, she began to sway from side to side as if she were going to faint, and, as I had less patience with fainting than with shrieking, I was obliged to put my arms around her. I should say that she weighed about a hundred and thirty.

It seemed to me that she was never going to raise her head, so I was obliged to do it. I was right about her eyes; for they were as big as saucers and were staring at me with an excited, wondering expression such as you see on persons before they get used to the police court. I didn't know what in the world to say to her, but, as she evidently expected me to say something, I racked my memory for the proper thing and then propounded:

"I say, do you like books?"

At this, the head went back on to my shoulder and she began sobbing harder than ever.

"Please, please," I urged at last, "do tell me what's the matter."

Between sobs she blurted out, "There's a bu-bu-burglar in the house."

"For heaven's sake!" I replied, "is that all?"

Again she looked at me with that wondering expression, and I asked her if she minded my smoking. She made no reply, but took away her arms and sat down on the bed.

"You're the man who lives in the gate-house," she said, and I acknowledged it, with inward distaste. Is a man never safe from the prying of the neighbors?

"Now about this burglar business," I began, trying to get things on a businesslike basis.

I am not good at reproducing sobs and feminine talk, so I will not try to repeat what she said. The gist of it was that she had been awakened by hearing a man in the hall, had seen him pass to the head of the stairs, and then had locked the door, thrown open the window, and begun to shriek. Wishing to be as agreeable as possible, I admitted that, from a professional point of view, she had done the wisest thing conceivable.

"Who else is in the house?" I asked, with a mechanical lapse into my former occupation.

She explained that, except for two maid servants, she was all alone. Her father was away for the night. The gardener and chauffeur did not live on the grounds.

On this basis I judged that Tommy—for I had no doubt who was doing the job—was probably still in the house. He was not a man to leave until he had got the last movable article. I did not quite like to interfere with a work on which his heart was set so deeply; but I had to get peace at some

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price, and so I offered to search the house. As I rose to do it, the young lady rose also, and exclaimed in alarm:

"But don't leave me here alone!" and there was a movement in the direction of my shoulder, which was already wet enough.

"Well, then, you'll have to come with me," I said firmly; "but you'd better put on something else. It might be drafty."

I turned to the door as I said this, and she joined me a minute later with a sort of dressing-gown thrown over her shoulders.

I HAD TAKEN TO NEWSPAPER WORK, AND HE HAD GONE INTO BURGLARY. . . . . I RECOGNIZED, WITH NO STING OF ENVY, THAT TOMMY HAD COME NEARER TO REALIZING HIS DREAMS THAN I HAD.

As soon as we reached the foot of the stairs we came to plentiful evidences of burglar's work. Drawers of tables, shelves of cupboards, and the whole top of the sideboard had been rifled. The articles not taken were scattered around in promiscuous confusion. Mentally, I was inclined to criticize Tommy for his untidiness; but I reflected that, in view of the screams, his time must have been somewhat limited.

Through library, parlor, and dining-room we searched, and still no sight of the burglar. In the kitchen we saw the first closed door that we had come to, and I asked my companion what it was.

"It's the pantry," she explained in perfect composure. She was beginning to warm up to the work in fine style.

I put my hand on the pantry door and pulled. It opened for about two inches and then went back with a slam.

"Here he is," I said, somewhat sadly, for I didn't wholly see where Tommy was going to get away. The lady showed more signs of fainting, so I was obliged to act and said, "Come out of there!" as loudly as I could.

With a feeling of relief I felt the doorknob give, and as Tommy heard the sound of my voice he came out quietly enough. I tipped him the wink, and he understood, for when I put my hand on his arm he gave a very pretty imitation of a man trying to get away. After a while, however, I told him to quit, and I looked around to plan our next step.

"It seems to me," I said, at last, "that the only thing for me to do is to take this man to the village and hand him over to the proper authorities." Of course, Tommy knew that as soon as we were outside of the

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door we would drop down to the cottage and talk it over. So he said nothing. But the lady was suddenly firm.

"Oh, don't!" she exclaimed. "Don't leave me alone! I could never stand it! Besides, he might hurt you. He's bigger than you are."

"I'll take my chances on that," I replied, a little nettled, while Tommy began to smile and gave me a sly dig in the ribs.

"Well, what else can we do?" I asked, resolved not to telephone to the village. Anything but that! I decided, and, fearing lest the idea might occur to the lady, I hastened the issue and suggested that, as the fellow had not succeeded in getting away with any thing, we let him go this once, on his promise never to burgle again.

At this Tommy broke into tears and promised that he would never steal again as long as he lived. He said that he was an honest mechanic, but had been driven out of work by the trusts and had to steal to buy food for his wife and babies. The lady was quite moved by this, and the result was that I solemnly conducted the burglar to the door and bade him good-night. He himself was quite downhearted at having to leave the silver, because, as he said, the spoons had my initials on them. I told him that was all right, and, after borrowing a match, he went off into the darkness.

I turned back into the hall, as I had volunteered to stand guard all night, and asked the young lady —who told me that her name was Miss Wellington —if I might have some paper. I thought this would be a good time to go on with my story. She brought me three sheets bearing the coat of arms of the Wellington family, and then left me. Shortly afterward she came down again, fully dressed, and said that she was going to stand guard with me. I now saw what she did with her hair.

I started in to work again and, to make a fair beginning, I wrote: "And so we settled in the little vine-clad cottage——"

"Do you know," said Miss Wellington, "that you are the bravest man I ever saw?"

I didn't care to have her interrupt me, so I went on, "—far from the noise——"

"Yes, you are," she interrupted again, and I was obliged to stop and argue the point with her, because I knew lots of men on the midnight squad and one or two in the detective force who were much braver. After that, there was no writing the story, and we talked of all kinds of things until daybreak, when I went home and to bed.

AS SOON AS WE REACHED THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS, WE CAME TO PLENTIFUL EVIDENCES OF BURGLAR'S WORK.

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The next morning at breakfast the young lady, wearing still another dress, came to the cottage just as I was feeding the chickens. She was accompanied by an old, white-haired gentleman, who thanked me for saving his daughter. I told him not to mention it; that if I could ever do anything like that again, I should be more than glad to respond to his call. I showed them the chickens and then took them to see how I had fixed up the house, apologizing for having spilled the ink on the matting. They said it didn't matter, which I thought was very nice of them. So, when they left I asked them to come again, as it is one of the principles of country life to be on good terms with the neighbors.

They did come, and again and again, until both Miss Wellington and her father got the habit of stopping for a chat over the fence every time they passed my way.

Then one morning, about two weeks after the burglary, we heard that another large country house had been broken into. Following this news father and daughter made a longer call than usual and resumed some more of that rot about my being a hero. Finally, after much hesitation, the old gentleman asked me whether I would not come up and live in the big house, saying that they would all feel safer if I were there. The reader will be somewhat surprised to learn that I went; but I must explain that it occurred to me that this would save me the bother of cooking my meals, which, to be frank, had been a big source of trouble to me since Tommy left.

I was glad to learn from the newspapers that Tommy was doing very well, and I wished him luck, until, as house after house was rifled in the countryside, father and daughter began to heap so many expressions of gratitude upon me that it was impossible to do a bit of real writing. In desperation I finally had to send a note to Tommy, addressed in care of the plumber, asking him to cut it out. It is a strong proof of the hospitality which he had received that he did.

My troubles, however, were only increasing. Miss Wellington professed the greatest interest in my literary work and used to sit in the room while I was writing. I could not very well be rude to her, so I pretended that I liked it. In reality, I was seriously handicapped, as I was in the midst of a first draft for a love story, and you have no idea how hard it is to write a love story with a girl in the room. I remember, one time, just as I was writing some particularly tender passage about "my wife," she came up and looked over my shoulder until her hair tickled my neck and I had to put my hand up and scratch it. How can a man keep his thoughts on romance with things like that happening around him?

Thus, again, the clutches of real life were closing around me, and one night the end came. We were sitting in a hammock on the west piazza enjoying a night of really warm Indian summer. I tried to get a chair, but I couldn't find one, and so I had to sit in the hammock beside Miss Wellington. I had given up trying to finish my love story; but under the soft, balmy night it seemed as if I could begin it again, and I lived it over in my mind, line by line. I saw "my wife" in her white dress and thought how we would sit on the piazza just like this, both in one hammock. It would have been perfect if Miss Wellington had not been there.

But I went on dreaming just as if I had been alone. Once I let my thoughts carry me away and I awoke to find that I was clasping Miss Wellington's hand. Back to wake-a-day earth again! I turned and looked at her, and I had to admit that she was pretty in the faint moonlight. It was too bad that she was not poor enough to be a commuter's wife!

The next minute—but this story has had real-life incidents enough, and I will skip over what happened. In brief, Miss Wellington asked me why I didn't ask her to marry me. She had me there—I couldn't think of any reason. I finally scraped together enough wits, however, to explain that, when a man is a writer, he has little time and thought for anything else; and, while I respected her and thought her the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, still I could not be drawn away from my original purpose of writing romances.

But in the morning, when I woke up, I saw that I would write no more stories in that locality. There was no material. And by night I had packed up the furnishings of my vine-clad cottage. The next day I presented myself to the city editor and told him, in a few words, of my failure as an author. He laughed a little and then asked: "What are you going to do now?"

"I'm going back to the police desk," I replied. "I've cut out this romance business. It's not true to life; there's nothing in it."

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LITTLE STORIES OF REAL LIFE

THE HANDICAP

BY ELIZABETH NEWPORT HEPBURN

"IT IS a proposition we can not leave open," the senior partner was saying. "So we want you to consider the matter in its every aspect before you refuse."

Dan Callam, young, broad-shouldered, towering above the older man, shook his head regretfully.

"It's impossible, Mr. Warren. My salary makes both ends meet now—by stretching. If I went in on this proportional basis, it might mean, for the first year or two, either heavy debt or"—he hesitated, with the characteristic masculine habit of avoiding personalities in business—"or hardship for my wife. She is full of energy but not strong; where she is concerned I can take no risks."

The senior partner of the law firm of Warren & Wade was unmarried. "I see your difficulty, Callam; it is so universal that many New York lawyers find matrimony too hard a game to tackle under thirty-five or forty. There are doubtless compensations either way, but my own feeling is aptly expressed by the versatile Rudyard: 'He travels the fastest who travels alone.'"

Dan laughed and flushed boyishly. "That poem happens to be one of our pet enthusiasms, Mr. Warren. Theoretically, Mrs. Callam and I endorse it and the sentiments of Captain Mafflim, Gadsby's friend. But practically, we're like the people who ask advice in order to do the other thing!"

That afternoon, as he climbed the stairs to their scrap of an apartment, which Lee had miraculously transformed into a home, Callam wondered whether they would have been wiser to wait. They had married two years ago, he twenty-three, Lee twenty. Even then they had known each other for years, ever since the girl had come from her dreaming South to his hurtling city. She had been to Dan inspiration, incentive, reward! But had they been merely engaged, he need not have missed to-day's opportunity!

As he inserted his latchkey, the door, flung wide by an impetuous hand, changed might-have-been to actuality in the shape of a madly barking fox terrier and a girl whose arms went about Dan's neck with the precision of habit and the passion of youth. She was a slim, bright-eyed thing; warm color wavered in her cheeks under a thatch of leaf-brown hair and her pointed chin shaped her face like a heart.

"Dan, you're a lamb to get home early," she cried. "And you can pose a few minutes for Henry Esmond in the Thackeray calendar I'm working on. What he needs is decent legs, and yours are magnificent!"

Dan laughed, hugging her bear-fashion until she pleaded for breath, while Dixie spurned the floor in an ecstasy of mad leaps, endeavoring to lick the faces of his adored humans. In the living-room beyond, the terrier curled up on his cushion, Dan posed with an air of resignation, and Lee painted

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rapidly in the waning light.

"Aunt Matilda has been here, Dan," she said at last.

There was an undercurrent of emotion in her voice, and Dan looked up quickly. "What's the matter, honey? Did you unearth some forgotten bill, or has that horrid backache come again?"

She smiled at his anxiously puckered brows. "Neither, dear. It's just Aunt-Matilda-ache! She's been telling me how hard on a man early marriage is; that a young lawyer in your position gets in a rut and stays there for years. She rubbed in what she's said all along—that we were idiots not to wait!"

"We're asking no favors of Aunt Matilda, so where does her right to kick come in? Why do you listen to her, beloved?"

"Because I can't help it," said Lee, laying down palette and brushes. "You see, Dan, in an evil moment I told her that you would carry too much insurance and had to borrow on your policy last year and were still behind. By way of helping us out, she made me a proposition. It seems that a publishing house here has suggested that she go to Holland and collect material for a book on modern Dutch art, covering much the same ground as those talks she gave at the Waldorf. The book is to be voluminous, profusely illustrated by reproductions, and she will probably be gone anywhere from fifteen months to two years. She wants me to go with her!"

Dan was frankly puzzled. "She wants you to go with her? Why, of course she does! You and I may want the moon and a million, but I don't see Providence or Pierpont Morgan gratifying our modest whims!"

Lee gave a half-hearted gurgle that was nearer tears than laughter. "She says, this cold-blooded Aunt Matilda, that if I went along as her paid companion, and spent the time she spends in galleries and libraries at a good art-school, I might learn enough technique to get in the top-layer magazines. She says that if we sublet the apartment and you saved your income, by the end of a year we'll be in better financial position than we've been. And she tells me that any married woman who in this day shirks the responsibility of becoming an economic unit is an idler and a parasite!"

Dan's laughter had a riotous, rollicking quality that filled the room with imps of mirth. "Oh, you Economic Unit, you! So that's the bee in Aunt Matilda's bonnet. What else are you, anyhow—making over old clothes, concocting stews and soup out of nothing-and-genius, upholstering your own furniture, and earning two hundred dollars in cold cash by your drawings for 'Furbelows and Frills'? If you aren't an economic unit, what are you?"

Lee rubbed her cheek against a comfortably adjacent coat sleeve with a sense of safety and peace, for the moment. But she returned to Aunt Matilda's proposition. "That's what I said, Dan. I bragged of all my economies; of what I save and what I make. She said these things were trifles, that in our generation a woman, to be self-supporting, must do one thing *well*, and that instead the average woman does many things abominably."

"You do one thing well," said Dan. "I'm willing to testify in court that as a wife you are perfection! And I wish Aunt Matilda would go to——"

Lee's hand went over his lips, and for a

"SHE TELLS ME THAT ANY MARRIED WOMAN WHO SHIRKS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BECOMING AN ECONOMIC UNIT IS A PARASITE!"

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moment she leaned close, in one of those eloquent silences which mean more than many adjectives. Then she said: "There's one thing more. She suggested finally that if I left you now and learned my own trade and saved money, I should be more independent of you!"

"The devil she did!" Dan was crimson with impotent rage. "Lee, I consider your Aunt Matilda the most impertinent meddler I know! I only wish I had been here to tell her so!"

"Of course she's impertinent, Dan. One's family is always impertinent. And Aunt Matilda has looked out for me ever since father died. But, after all, you *are* tied down, at twenty-five; it is up to me to help —if I can—and oh, boy darling, we do want so many things!"

It was here that Dan blundered. In his eagerness to show her that he could manage his life and hers he told her of the firm's flattering offer. "Which would seem to indicate that I may accomplish something without your going to Holland to study art and dance attendance upon a crotchety old maid," he ended.

"But you have refused the offer," said Lee. "You were obliged to stick to the poky old salary for my sake!"

Their talk ceased abruptly, for Lee went about the process of getting dinner, putting on her immaculate white bib apron, in which Dan always found her particularly irresistible. Usually they made of each meal together a festival, but to-night they were silent, absent, curiously separated by the fact that they were thinking of the same thing. The night before, Dan had burned much midnight oil over a difficult law case, so he went to bed early, and because of his splendid body's instinct to restore expended energy he fell asleep promptly. But in the night he was conscious that Lee was bending over him.

"Dan, are you awake?"

Sleepily he touched a braid of her bright hair. She looked like a little girl in her long white gown, to him, as sacred and lovely as some frescoed Madonna—and so wonderfully his!

"Dan"—her voice was exquisitely caressing—"do you dream how absurdly, how impossibly I love you? Oh, Dan, you could never have a doubt, no matter what I might do—tell me so!"

"I suppose I measure your love by my own, Lee. And that makes it loom pretty big," he said slowly. She switched off the light with a low laugh of relief. "I'm a pig to wake you, boy darling—but I had to; the whole place was haunted by Aunt-Matilda goblins!" When he woke later, she was asleep in his arms, but his cheek was wet with her tears. Softly but fluently he cursed the machinations of Aunt Matilda.

In the days that followed, the shadow of that enterprising lady still brooded over the household like some bird of ill omen which they had not vigor enough to drive away. And the fact that both Dan and Lee steered clear of the fatal subject could not blind the girl's intuition to the significance of the offer made to Dan.

One day he came home with a bit of news which interested them both. Wade, the junior partner, had suggested that Mrs. Wade would like to call on Mrs. Callam.

"And you'll like her—she's worth knowing," said Dan. "When she comes to the office now and then, a current of fresh clean air blows in with her. She is neither young nor pretty. When Wade married her last year people talked about her money, said that was the magnet which drew him. But I don't believe it! She has distinction, charm—would have both if she had no setting of expensive clothes, no background of social prestige."

When Mrs. Wade did call, a few days later, it was just as Aunt Matilda got up to leave. Aunt Matilda wore a triumphant expression which quite mitigated the fierceness of her parrot beak, for she flattered herself that at last she was making some impression upon her niece regarding the European plan. When she had departed, Lee found herself alone with a broad-shouldered, bright-eyed woman whose features were rugged even to the edge of homeliness—and whose smile was the nicest she had ever seen.

She talked in a comradely fashion which gave Lee the pleasant illusion of their being old friends. "I've heard so many charming things about your husband from both Mr. Wade and his partner that I felt I was missing something by not knowing his wife," she said.

The color flying to Lee's face made her look very girlish, for all the wifely pride in her eyes.

"His wife is a horribly crude, unsophisticated young person," she said shyly, "and

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"AND WHILE I KNOW I AM RIGHT," SAID THE GIRL WEARILY, "I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT I'M SNIPPING MY OWN HEART TO BITS!"

I'm afraid he's dreadfully silly to have a wife, anyhow!"

Mrs. Wade was looking about the sunny room, small but uncrowded; at the good etchings on the wall, the original sketches here and there—spirited drawings of New York streets, for the most part. But at Lee's words her eyes came back to the girl's face. "That, my dear, is where we differ! The man who marries young is the man who wins, in the end, those things most worth having!"

Lee's eyes misted suddenly. After the harangue Aunt Matilda, ideal Sentiment Antidote, this little speech was balm to her spirit. But her common sense reminded her promptly that Mrs. Wade had married a man no longer young, as Lee and Dan saw youth, and that, moreover, she had come to her husband with full coffers.

"It is always so easy to do without money when you have it," thought the girl, a little bitterly.

A week later she put on her best frock to call on Mrs. Wade in a mood of numb despair such as she had never known before, for the die was cast and Aunt Matilda had won. Last night Lee had told Dan that if he would consent she was going with Aunt Matilda for a year, possibly longer. Dan had looked at her proudly, his young face set, and told her that there was no question of consent, that she must of course do what she wished. That was Dan—his characteristic refusal to interfere with any plan or conviction of hers! She had put out her arms.

"Oh, Danny, you do see—it is for the sake of your work, our future—" But he had kissed her gently with none of the young exuberance, the sparkle, and boyish mischief she so loved. All night they had feigned sleep, neither deceiving the other. Lee had shed no tears, but she felt battered and old that afternoon when she found herself in Mrs. Wade's drawing-room. At first other people were there and Lee played her part passably; then later Lee found herself alone with her hostess in a sitting-room before a crackling fire, although the windows were wide to the crisp freshness of young April. A round tea-table, with Sèvres and silver and a vase of white violets, was drawn between the two.

"Mrs. Callam," said the older woman suddenly, "I am almost forty years old—old enough to be your mother had the Fates been so kind to me! Little girl, won't you tell me what is hurting you so?"

Like a frank child, Lee told her the story of the youthful marriage, of their efforts to steer clear of debt, of Dan's recent experience at the office, and of Aunt Matilda, her offer, and Lee's final acceptance. "And while I know I am right," said the girl wearily, "I can't help feeling that I'm snipping my own heart to bits!"

The woman who was forty looked at the girl of twenty-two with a queer little smile. "I don't wonder!" she said. "Deserting one's husband must be rather painful!"

Lee's face burned. "I don't think you understand, Mrs. Wade," she said proudly.

"It is you who do not understand," said Jane Wade—"you and that amazing aunt, who is old enough to know better. Have you lived two years with that splendid boy of yours and not learned how dependent a man is on the woman he loves for encouragement, strength, happiness, safety?"

"Oh," said Lee breathlessly, "of course

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he will miss me, though it is all for his sake that I am going. But, dear Mrs. Wade, you don't know Dan—how strong he is, how brave, how loyal! I might stay away five years and he would be just the same. Separation will not change him a bit."

The wife of the junior partner was surprised to find that she believed this amazing assertion; she had met Dan Callam. After a little pause she said gently: "Then you have married a rare man, Mrs. Callam."

Lee's eyes glowed, her firm chin quivered. "It is true, Dan *is* rare," she said.

Mrs. Wade took a bonbon from a silver dish and ate it absently. She seemed friendly, comprehending. What she said was like a bomb flung across the quiet room:

"And you marry a clean, great-hearted boy like that and deliberately hazard his happiness, blight his radiant youth, by leaving him alone a whole year *because you know you can trust him!* That seems to me like penalizing goodness!"

The girl's startled eyes looked into the woman's. "But I am going for his sake—that I may not be a handicap! It hurts as nothing has ever done—the bare thought of leaving him!"

"Let us just consider him," said the other, coolly. "You speak of his being handicapped financially; it *is* harder for a man to earn a living for two—particularly in New York. So much I grant. But in every other way the married man has the advantage of the bachelor. And if he marries young, glowing with hope and ambition, untarnished by those compromises men usually make, then he is on a different plane from the unmarried men and from those who marry at thirty-five, forty—fifty! For happiness is the best backer on earth—better than money, influence, political preferment, better than genius without it!"

Lee might be still unconvinced as to the issue in hand, but her eyes glowed with the secret consciousness of their love, hers and Dan's, safe, sweet, untarnished—yes, that was the beautiful word, "untarnished." But Mrs. Wade's manner changed suddenly.

"I am going to tell you a bit of my personal history, Mrs. Callam. Years ago I was poor and proud, a strong-willed, high-spirited girl, full of dreams and fancies, and with a consuming horror of whatever seemed to me sordid or prosaic. I lived in a college town, and Tom Wade was a student there, so that I knew him from the time I was sixteen. At the end of his senior year he told me he loved me, asked me to wait until he could make his way. I cared, deeply—and for a little while we were very happy. Then my stepmother talked of the sinister aspects of poverty, dwelt on the long struggle ahead for such mating as ours must be; and at last I broke my engagement."

She stopped abruptly, to continue, after a moment: "Neither of us married any one else, and years later I had a substantial legacy left me by a favorite uncle. I came here to live, met my old sweetheart again, by this time a successful man over forty: I married him, as you know. In the eyes of the world it is a romantic affair, the reward of discretion; and in a sense the world is right. But to you I am telling the whole truth: the man I married was not the boy I loved. The years of solitary struggle had killed that boy for all time! Both of us have come to see that expediency instead of love has molded us, and the molding is not what it might have been!"

AUNT MATILDA GLARED. "OF ALL UNGRATEFUL, SENTIMENTAL, SPINELESS YOUNG WOMEN!"

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She touched Lee's cheek with her cool fingers. There was a poignant note in her voice which vibrated strangely through the luxurious room.

"Dear child, to-day is yours; youth and love are yours—hold them tight in both your hands!"

Lee went home in the April dusk, to find Aunt Matilda comfortably ensconced in Dan's easy chair, reading his evening paper. "Your German cleaning woman let me in," she said. "And I've engaged our passage for May fourth and also found a tenant for the apartment, if you are willing to sublet furnished."

As she spoke, a key clicked in the door and Dan came in. Lee saw him as he was, a little shabby perhaps, but a virile man whom life might bend but could never break, and still a boy, whom happiness could exquisitely mold! She turned from him to her aunt.

"Aunt Matilda, I'm sorry, but I can't go with you. You must get the Allardyce girl as you thought of doing at first."

Aunt Matilda glared. "Of all ungrateful, sentimental, spineless young women!" Power of further expression seemed to fail her.

Lee spoke very gently, but her head was high.

"I made a wrong promise, that I should be spineless to keep," she said. "I have discovered that Dan and I don't need 'success' so much as we need each other. Whether we flourish or stagnate or starve, we are going to do it *together!*"

Dan took two strides across the room; his arm went around his wife. "You've meant to be kind, Aunt Matilda," he said, "but Lee wants to stay home, and I need her!"

After the irate dame's departure, Dan carried his wife around the apartment as though she were a banner, Dixie barking madly in the rear of the procession! When they were a shade less hilarious, Lee told him of Mrs. Wade. "And when you came in the door in this blessed, shabby coat, I knew I'd never go!" she said, one red cheek against his.

Dan attempted a casual and offhand manner as he told her that Warren & Wade had made a new proposition. He was to be guaranteed his present income and a small percentage on new business. "It's much better than their original offer, possibly because I've carried out successfully some special work this last month. Wade told me they had been considering a clever chap in the office of Hyde & Hunter, a bachelor, but had decided that a married man with heavier stakes in the game would be more valuable to the firm!"

He met Lee's dazzled eyes with a look that held the steady fire of his tested manhood, but his voice had the familiar ring of mischievous triumph as he added:

"Which means, Mrs. Callam, that my Handicap is an Asset, after all!"

THE RUNAWAYS

BY LINDA STEVENS ALMOND

HE WAS a little old man with a weather-beaten face, and a toil-bent body clothed in Sunday best. In one hand he carried a paper sack, while the other clung to a knotted cane; and he smiled out on the circus throng the smile of a joy-mad child. Joy, joy was everywhere, in everything. The monotonous drum of the side-show, the incessant call of the big tent, the cry of the peanut and red lemonade vender, the hum of the happy-hearted crowd—all signified magic.

There was one discordant note. It was a red-headed, freckle-faced small boy. He came stumbling up to the broken-down bench occupied by the little old man, weeping in genuine distress.

"I say, partner," asked the old man, "what you cryin' about?"

The boy removed two exceedingly soiled fists from two tear-filled eyes and regarded his questioner with hopeful speculation.

"You ain't lost the price?" resumed the little old man, nodding his head toward the tent emblazoned in brilliant lettering "Big Show."

"Never had it," whimpered the boy.

"Gracious me, that's too bad!" The man opened his paper sack, and drew out a

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baker's pie, which he proffered to the boy. "Them is right tasty," he said. "Try one."

The boy hastily accepted the pastry with an indistinct "Much obliged," and continued to eye the man speculatively. "Goin' in the big show, mister?" he inquired suddenly.

"Nope," said the man.

The boy's hopeful stare settled into disgust.

"I reckon you seen the free show, partner?" probed the old man.

The boy nodded, his mouth buried in the pie.

"My, now!" proceeded the old man, "that's somethin'. I got here too late for that, an' I walked tol'able fast, too; but five miles is a sight of travel fer old legs, 'bout give' out."

"Five miles!" The boy's gaze evinced newly awakened admiration, and an arm went up to brush aside the lingering teardrops.

"My ole woman'd call me a sinner." The old man chuckled and drew from the bag a pie for himself. "Eat pretty moreish, don't they, partner? Well, as I was sayin', my ole woman'd call me a sinner; bein' easy like, I call myself a runaway."

"I played hooky," cried the boy, in a burst of confidence.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the old man. "You an' me is somethin' alike. We're both runaways, partner."

"'Tain't so awful much fun," scoffed the boy, thrusting his hands into diminutive pants' pockets, "ef you cain't see the show."

"I'm obliged to think you air mistaken," commented the little old man. "I reckon I've seen more to-day than I've seen in twenty years. But it ain't so cur'us, after all, considerin' it's the fust holiday I've had in all them years." The old man's eyes took on a reflective gaze, and he dug designs in the ground with his knotted cane. "Nothin' has passed my noticin'. I couldn't sleep last night fer the thoughts of it, an', bless me! I was up at sunrise to start the tramp——"

"Why didn't you ride?" the boy demanded.

"Sakes!" exclaimed the man. "Didn't my ole woman know I had no more business here than a rabbit, an' she that's always contended a circus was one of Satan's contrivances! I never had the courage to argue. Ef I had, I'd 'a' told her Satan's lots busier outside of circuses than in. But my wife ain't a body you can make see what she ain't a mind to see."

"You come all that way jes' to see the outside?" questioned the boy.

"I reckon I did, son," admitted the old man. "It's interestin' to see the tent, an' hear the band, an' the ticket-seller callin' of 'em to step lively, an' many a grand sight there be to take in when a body has been pos'ponin' a holiday goin' on twenty years —Do you live near, partner?"

"Down the road," said the boy.

The old man's eyes followed the sweep of the boy's arm.

"So near!" he exclaimed. "Then you seen them set up."

"I seen ever'thing," declared the boy, "'cept the actin' an' side-show."

"Oh!" breathed the little old man in excited ecstasy. "You couldn't say ef they had any new ways of drivin' poles?"

The band broke into a hilarious tune.

"People's beginnin' to go in," lamented the boy.

"Look here, partner, don't go to cryin' again. A body what's seen 'em set up, an' all but the actin', ain't got no business to be whimperin'. Even ef I hadn't tramped it, I'd had them bills posted at Dobb's Corner to be thankful for seein'. An' me that used to be a member!" The knotted cane went to the ground with a thud, and the bright old face was a-quiver with expectancy of the effect of his assertion.

"A member!" The boy quickly withdrew his gaze from the merry throng. "Did you say a member, mister?"

"Member of a circus, partner," he affirmed, overjoyed at the interest he had created. "I jined 'em one spring while they's passin' through our neighborhood, an' I stayed till they broke up in the fall, on a day similar to this." His eyes swept the cloudless sky, and unconsciously he sniffed the air fragrant with Indian-summer sweetness.

"Was you an actor?" The boy's tone held reverence.

"Me? No," chuckled the old man. "My ole woman wouldn't had me ef I had been an actor. Actors, in her mind, is the creatin' of Satan. 'Tain't so, partner. Actor folks is more Christian sometimes than them that ain't actor folks. I was a hand. That is, I helped set up an' tear up; an' me an' a feller named Solomon could get a pole in an' out the ground quicker 'n a cat

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can wink an eye. We had it down pat—me an' Solomon Wise—an' he was as fine a feller as you're a mind to know; an' ef you take my word, he promised to be more 'n a hand. He was a sight younger 'n me, an' born to it."

"Why'd you leave?" The boy had discovered a hero. The call of the "Big Show" had lost some of its magic. Here was a genuine part of one, and the genuine part had tramped five miles to see only the outside.

"Well," began the old man, "The ole woman was as pretty as a pink then, an' I kept feelin' the tug of matin' at my heart, an' I jes' had to answer it. After that, the years was so busy with workin' to keep body an' soul together, an' babies comin' too fas' to count, that I kind of forgot I ever keered; an', as I say, my ole woman claims Satan is in cahoots with circuses an' its folks, so I steered clear till one day at Dobb's Corner I seen the bills. Partner, right then an' there the mem'ry woke up, an' I studied them bills as ef I'd been a tack like you. An' here I am!" The old man rose and clapped his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Come, let's you an' me take a look about. There's pretty nearly as much outside as inside. It jes' takes a body like me to discover . . . my ole woman!"

And there she was, the little old man's old woman, gray-garbed and bonneted, stooped and withered, gazing eager-eyed on Satan's invention.

"I'm caught, partner," said the old man, and a saddened note trailed in his tone.

"So's she!" exulted the boy, prancing in glee. "So's she, mister!"

Enlightenment slowly dawned in the old man's face. "So she is," he snickered suddenly, and crept close to nudge his old woman. "Put one on Satan, didn't you, sis?" he asked.

"Well, I declare!" gasped the old woman, and her gaze swept the old man from tip to toe until the truth clearly came. "Ef a body can't trust no one! You let on——"

"You didn't let on," chuckled the old man, "an' here you be!"

"Mandy's folks come by in the wagon," apologized the old woman lamely, "an' I calc'lated the sight of the crowd wouldn't do me no harm an'——"

"Don't go to 'scusin', sis," gamed the old man. "We're 'bout even, so let's take in the sights. This little feller b'longs with us; he's a runaway, too, an' we all 'pear to be in the same boat."

The ticket-seller saw them elbowing through the crowd. "This way," he cried lustily, "this way to the Big Show."

The boy and the little old man and his old woman halted a pace away.

"Hi, Country!" called the ticket-seller. "Loosen up. Don't be a tight wad. Let the little feller see the sights."

The old man was inclined for a moment to be indignant. Then memories of bygone days sent indignation to the winds. It was only the way of these free folks.

"Come on, Rube," urged the ticket-seller; "be a sport!"

"Friend, ef you will, I will." The old man stepped nearer, merriment crinkling his eyes. "I've got two dimes and seven cents. Ef you will let me, an' partner here, an' my ole woman, in for that price, we'll—Lord A'mighty!" The old man was gazing deep and searchingly into the unperturbed ticket-seller's face.

"Pass on, pass on, Rube," he bawled. "Will you study me, you ole scalawag!"

The little old man tiptoed.

"You ain't—" a vague light of recognition stole over the ticket-seller's red face.

"I am!" cried the old man, joy radiating his furrowed features. "An' you're Solomon Wise!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the ticket-seller, grabbing the old man's upstretched hand with a hearty guffaw. "Say, wait, you an' the kid an' the ole lady's got to go in. Lord save us! you can take the town, Jim, you old hayseed, you old scoundrel, you! Get a crowd—here's a handful of tickets; and, drat your ole hide, I'll see you later!—Oh, you—you—This way to the Big Show—this way——"

"Sis—" the little old man tucked the old woman's wrinkled hand in the hollow of his arm— "Sis," he said, in happy exultation, "do you and partner reckon Satan works hand in hand with such fellers as that?"

The little old woman flashed a holiday smile. The boy had not heard; his cup of joy was full. And the runaways filed through the ropes.

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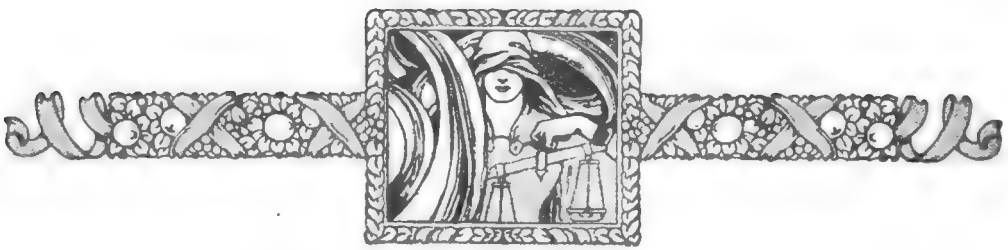

STRAIGHT TALK

SOCIALISM—THE CURE FOR SOCIALISM

ONE of the most genially insouciant examples of *lucus a non lucendo* ever set before a trustful public came to birth in the August issue of EVERYBODY'S under the caption, "The Only Answer to Socialism." In this contribution, by Mr. George L. Record, of New Jersey, is formulated a scheme of social regeneration expressly stated to aim at the preservation of the Competitive System, while at the same time remedying the various evils which Socialists and non-Socialists alike to-day agree upon as paramount in American life.

I have read and re-read this article with keen enjoyment and interest, because, better than any other I have ever come across in this Vale of Tears, it demonstrates the absolute incapacity of the "Insurgent" or non-Socialist "Radical" to frame any scheme of amelioration which shall not, in its basic essence, partake so largely of the Socialist philosophy as to lead directly and inevitably thereto. It amply clinches the genial Victor Berger's saying: "Let the opposition steal all our thunder they want to. We don't care how it comes—just so it comes!"

Mr. Record naively plans to preserve Competition and to defeat the malevolent wiles of the Socialists by urging for national adoption a scheme of things involving, among others, the following points:

A—Economic Demands:
Municipal and Federal Ownership and Operation of:
1—Railways.
2—Telegraphs.
3—Telephones.
4—Express companies.
5—Pullman cars.
6—Street railways.
7—Electric-light companies.
8—Gas companies.
9—Water companies.
10—The Destruction of Private Property in Land.

B—Political Demands:
11—Election of United States Senators by Popular Vote.
12—Initiative.
13—Referendum.
14—Recall.

There! Now you have it. And this ('sh-h-h!), this—to head off Socialism!

Secret: The only sure-pop way to stop lions from eating lambs is to stuff lions *with* lambs till they gag at the mere sight of another juicy chop.

Brilliant anti-Socialist inspiration!

Not that Socialism is a lion, by any means, nor the Competitive System (Wall Street to the contrary) a lamb. Far be it from me—! But the analogy is what reviewers call "compelling."

I wonder if Mr. Record ever read a National Socialist Platform? All the way through, eh? Well, if so, I don't see just where he gets off. Do you? And, by the way, now that I think of it—have YOU ever read one?

Dear reader, between you and me, whisperingly in a dark corner—take this straight tip. Socialism, as now practically put up to us, for our decision, means just two main things:

1—The collective ownership of the means of production and distribution of wealth.

2—A truly democratic form of government.

Of course there are a lot of minor "immediate demands," but these two cover the main ground. Correlate them, now, with Mr. Record's Cure for Socialism, and see what you think about the Lion Cure for Muttonitis.

Mr. Record considerately omits from his list

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of Socialist demands the collective ownership of the coal, beef, steel, and certain other trusts. But Mr. Gary, Mr. Perkins, and other eminent gentlemen have recently been agitating government control in certain of these lines, inevitably leading to government ownership. And public opinion is so rapidly shaping thither that probably Mr. Record thought it unnecessary to burden his list with the obvious.

Admitting for the sake of argument, however, that he meant these to be excluded, let me ask —in drawing to a modest close—*if* his economic demands (1-10, inclusive) were brought about, how long would or could private business of any national importance compete with the massed governmental capital? How long would it be before *all* socially-operated business would also become socially owned?

As a matter of cold, inescapable fact, there *is* no way "to stop Socialism."

Socialism is evolution.

The only dangerous thing about evolution is in trying to abort it—trying to declare it illegal.

Those who get in the way of evolution are like the classic bovine that perked up to George Stephenson's locomotive and objected to it.

George said, looking at the remains: "Hoot mon, but it was dom bad for th' coo!"

Incidentally, *vive* Mr. Record's "Cure for Socialism!"

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND,
Bryant's Pond, Me.

OH ME! OH MY!!

(With apologies to Emerson Hough)

In re Hay-Fever. Having had hay-fever for over forty years, and having many times earnestly desired to die before it commenced, and having carefully watched for its cause, and having tested a large number of the so-called remedies, I feel called upon to dissent from many of the statements made by Mr. Hard in his article, "The Great American Sneeze."

From the numberless cases that I have known, I am satisfied that the time of commencement is not necessarily the same every year for every one. There are weeds or flowers that affect some people in June who are not troubled by the weeds or flowers which cause hay-fever in others in July or August. In other words, what causes it in some persons will not cause it in others who have the disease. And the time of beginning will depend upon the season, whether it be early or late.

A member of the medical faculty of the University of Minnesota, who has for years had himself as a patient to observe and experiment upon, says that no good comes from internal treatment; that the only sure preventive is not to go where the weed is which causes it; but that if you must stay at home, prepare a room, with a room inside of it made with gauze curtains and covering, and live in it.

Mr. Hard also seems to confound the pollen with the seed. If he will look carefully he will find that the seed is somewhat larger than the microscopic pollen.

I thought that I had discovered a remedy for the worst cases of hay-fever, but I have since found that it had been known before. Some twenty years ago I was on my way to Chicago, riding in a day coach, in the height of the hay-fever season. The day was very hot and every window was wide open. I was laboring hard to get my breath, having reached the asthmatic stage. The engine probably ran over a skunk, for, as I sat close to the window, gasping for breath, the fumes came up suddenly and penetrated nostrils and lungs, and I was instantly relieved. Of course it was but temporary; I have forgotten how long it helped me. Since then I have learned of two more cases. One was of a man who lived in Pennsylvania, who kept several of the animals in a pen, and when he reached his limit of suffering he would go near enough the pen so that he could throw a stone, or in some manner stir them up so as to get the perfume without endangering his clothing.

But Jonathan Carver was the first discoverer. In his travels in the Northwest in 1766, he records that he dissected a large number of skunks, and that the effluvia "is considered as conducive to clear the head, and to raise the spirits." I have known men who contemplated suicide when the hay fever was at its worst with them. This remedy might be of service in such an extreme, unless the patient preferred suicide to the remedy. I have never tried it—voluntarily. But I have seen many times when I think I should have used it.

St. Peter, Minn. T. G. C.

HOW ABOUT THAT NEW TARIFF BOARD?

As a constant reader of your valuable periodical and in sympathy with its aims, I take the liberty to mail you herewith some clippings relative to the character and objects of the new tariff board. They point out the true inwardness of its method and work. By its delays and its refusal of desired information the board lends itself to a palpable scheme for blocking that real revision of the tariff ordered by the people at the last election.

Its great and abiding service to the protected interests, however, yet remains to be rendered. Former methods of allowing the said interests to prepare the tariff schedules affecting them behind a show of public hearings, etc., are now so thoroughly discredited and obsolete that some new device for fooling the people had to

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be employed. Hence the present "commission of experts" has been evoked, with much throwing of dust in the air about the intricacies and perplexities of tariff requirements and the necessity for expert opinions as a guide to wise legislation. After many ostentatious delays and much labored pretense of elaborate investigation, a report entirely agreeable to the interests affected is duly prepared.

This is admirable, delightful—to the manufacturers and to the commissioners. It spares the former the time and expense of leaving their business while enlightening and guiding legislators at Washington; it gives the latter many wealthy acquaintances and good public dinners.

Meanwhile, where does the public come in? Who is going to inform the people of these doings and of the schemes afoot to keep the great protected interests—cotton, steel, sugar, woolen, etc.—in full enjoyment of their present privileges.

The time to show up a piece of crooked plotting is before it is consummated—not afterwards, for mere purposes of entertaining the reading public. What does Big Business care how often or how completely its dark doings are exposed after the goose is cooked? It merely wants to be allowed to go quickly on in the dark, developing new schemes to maintain the strangle-hold obtained after years of struggle. It can well afford to indulge in a cynical contempt of the public, which can be amused by the exposure of plots after they have been sprung and discarded.

Publicity *now* in this matter will mean prevention of the fraud, and will prove not only nice statesmanship but good journalism. A little earnest effort and prompt action will accomplish this in time to be of real service to the people.

Wilkinsonville, Mass. P. B.

"THE RIGHT TO LOVE"

I have just finished reading, in your September issue, the story entitled "The Right to Love," and want to tell you how much I appreciate the real meaning of the conversation held between the escaped convict and the prison chaplain's wife. I am a prisoner myself, and fully realize the truth of the words of this man when he says: " . . . You believe with me that life is Love. Where I am they deliberately deprive you of all life, because they deliberately deprive you of Love. They don't kill the body—they haven't the pluck; they kill the soul—by slow torture."

If the laws regulating the government of the unfortunates confined in the prisons and jails of this country were made so as to admit Love into the treatment of prisoners, and if the officers could be imbued with the spirit contained in this story, I believe that the whole problem of reforming the so-called criminal would be solved. No man is so low but has in him a spark, however small, of Love—and if properly nurtured and treated with a spirit of ordinary humanity, ninety-nine men out of a hundred could be resurrected and made useful members of society.

The country is gradually awakening to the fact that there must be a great change in the treatment of those convicted of criminal acts; and such stories as "The Right to Love," and the article by Morrison I. Swift in the current number of *The Atlantic Monthly*, dealing with the advanced methods used in the treatment of men in the jail at Montpelier, Vermont, will do much to advance the time when these changes may be brought about.

Boston, Mass. S. B.

JUST WAIT TILL WE GET HIS STORY!

I pause for a moment to tie a red tag on you. You have earned it. The tag will read: "To the editor of the magazine publishing the most piffleish piffle since the beginning of time up to the present date, this first premium is herewith awarded."

The unparalleled piffle I refer to appears in your September issue under the title "The Right to Love." If you published the story in payment of a bet on Bryan the last time, or if the author is a relative of your wife, and your wife has a bunch of money, and you try to keep on the good side of her—if you published it for some good and sufficient reason such as that, then I think you ought to run a footnote to that effect. Your readers have done nothing to merit such punishment as having to pay money for such paramount drivel as "The Right to Love." Even if it were passably well written, it would be supreme rot.

The only American magazines in which there would be any excuse for its publication are *Puck* and *Judge*, where readers could assume that it was a take-off on a literary effort by a man whose reason had fallen from its throne. Or it might be an interesting example of the drifting of the human mind, with the rudder gone, for the perusal of Matteawan patients. After this, when you publish anything so asinine, I wish you would run an editorial note to indicate whether it is conscious or unconscious humor.

I should like to have some assurance that the offense is not to be repeated in EVERYBODY'S, as I have enjoyed the magazine first-rate—much of the time—and I shouldn't want to go so far, even, as to open to the table of contents hereafter if it is going to contain such rot in the future.

Cleveland, Ohio. F. C. K.

P. S.—*I shall submit some fiction to you, myself, shortly.*

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UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

EDITOR'S NOTE.—A good story is a treasure, and, like other precious things, hard to find. Our readers can assist us, if they will, by sending any anecdotes they find that seem to them good. Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. The younger the better. We shall gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

Two negroes were comfortably sprawled beneath a shady oak, enjoying to the full the pastime of wishing for the impossible. Said one:

"I wish I had a million watermelons."

"Wouldn't dat be fine!" exclaimed the second negro. "Den we could eat all de watermelons we wanted."

"We!" mocked the first negro in disgust. "Why, I wouldn't give yo' a smell."

"Wouldn't you even give me one li'l watermelon?"

"'Wouldn't I even give you one li'l watermelon?'"—with rising indignation. "Why, yo' good-fo-nothin' lazy nigger, *hain't* yo' got 'nough ambition to wish fo' yo' own watermelons?"

In Delta, Colorado, the town council is becomingly modest; and we are told that when a tax on dogs was imposed, they made the ordinance read: "Tax on each dog—male, one dollar; vice versa, three dollars."

One cold winter day some railroad officials, while making an inspection of a large yard, stepped for a moment inside a switchman's shanty to get warm. Among them was a general superintendent who was known to have a mania for "scientific management" and the reduction of expenses. As they were leaving, the switchman asked the traveling yardmaster, whom he knew:

"Now, can ye be tellin' me who thot mon is?"

"That's the general superintendent," the yardmaster replied.

"What do you think o' thot? He's a foine-lookin' mon, and ye never would believe the tales ye are after hearin' about 'im."

"What have you heard about him, Mike?" was the curious question.

"Why, they do say that he was at the funeral of Mr. Mitchell's woife, and when the six pall-bearers come out he raised his hand and said: 'Hold on a minute, boys. I think yez can get along without two of thim.'"

Little Doris, four years old, had to "stand in the corner" for being naughty.

After some moments of perfect silence, Doris was observed intently examining the fingers of her left hand; then tragically she exclaimed: "My Dod! No two alike!"

A native of Germany was visiting an American friend in New York, and the latter bethought himself to take his guest on a visit to Niagara Falls.

The American, accustomed to bursts of wonderment and enthusiasm, was not a little astonished to see his Teutonic friend stand and gaze stolidly minute after minute upon that roaring cataract, without evincing the faintest sign of emotion.

Finally, unable any longer to conceal his chagrin and disappointment, the American turned to his companion and asked: "Don't you think that's a wonderful sight?"

"Vot?" asked the Dutchman.

"Why, that gigantic body of water pouring over that lofty precipice."

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The German stood for a few seconds longer, until he got that idea digested, then looked up blankly and asked:

"Vell, vot's to hinder it?"

One day Mark Twain was being shaved by a very talkative barber and was forced to listen to many of his anecdotes.

The barber had to strop his razor, and when he was ready, brush in hand, to commence again, he asked:

"Shall I go over it again?"

"No, thanks," drawled Mark. "It's hardly necessary. I think I can remember every word."

"When I first decided to allow the people of Tupelo to use my name as a candidate for Congress, I went out to a neighboring parish to speak," said Private John Allen recently to some friends at the old Metropolitan Hotel in Washington.

"An old darky came up to greet me after the meeting. 'Marse Allen,' he said, 'I's powerful glad to see you. I's known ob you sense you wuz a babby. Knew yoh pappy long befo' you-all wuz bohn, too. He used to hold de same office you got now. I 'members how he held dat same office fo' years an' years.'

"'What office do you mean, uncle?' I asked, as I never knew pop held any office.

"'Why, de office of candidate, Marse John; yoh pappy was candidate fo' many years.'"

As William Faversham was having his luncheon in a Birmingham hotel he was much annoyed by another visitor, who, during the whole of the meal, stood with his back to the fire warming himself and watching Faversham eat. At length, unable to endure it any longer, Mr. Faversham rang the bell and said:

"Waiter, kindly turn that gentleman around. I think he is done on that side."

Two Irishmen were watching the events at a field-meet. When one of the athletes jumped some twenty-one feet in the broad jump, Pat remarked to Mike, "Mike, that was a purty good jump."

"Yes," says Mike, "it was, but nothing like what we had back on the Ould Sod."

"Sure," says Pat, "and they never had anything to equal that jump."

"Yes," says Mike, "and they did. One day I saw a man jump twenty-three feet—backwards—up a hill—agin a strong wind."

"Mike, Mike, phwat are ye givin' us? No man ever did that."

"Sure and he did. Didn't I see it with me own eyes?"

"Well, and if ye did, who might that man be?"

"Sure, and it was your own cousin, Dinnis O'Shea."

". . . Me own Cousin Dinnis, eh? Well—well, *he* might."

Two hunters had "beaten" the trail along the marshes of Long Island for three days with an unusually small bag resulting. The food-supply had run out much ahead of scheduled time; far worse, the "liquid ammunition" had been exhausted in the early stages of the hunt.

After following the coast vainly for three hours, looking for some sign of habitation, they spied an empty house on the beach.

"Go in and look it over, Bill," said one.

He did so, returning in a moment, empty-handed.

"Anything in there?" asked his companion, expectantly.

"Nope," replied his running mate, with a profound sigh—"nothing but two empty bottles full of water."

At a meeting of the State Medical Society, the secretary read a letter from the consul of one of our far-away possessions, urging the need of a resident physician in his district. In the moment of silence that followed the reading a young man in the hall arose and said modestly:

"I wish you would put me down for that place, sir. It sounds good to me. My practise here died last night."

The following appeared in a village paper not long ago:

"Amos Green and Mrs. Nettie Clark, both of this vicinity, were married here to-day. Amos leaves four children by his first wife and many warm friends."

During the campaign for the commission form of government at Keokuk, Iowa, an old German was arguing with a Swede who was opposed to the change on the ground that there would be too few men to manage affairs. The German clinched his argument with: "*Himmel*, man, it takes only the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to run Heaven—I guess three men ought to be able to run Keokuk."

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Everybody's Magazine

PUBLISHED BY

THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

ERMAN J. RIDGWAY, *President* | TRUMBULL WHITE, *Managing Editor* | WM. L. JENNINGS, *Sec'y and Treas.*
RAY BROWN, *Art Director* | ROBERT FROTHINGHAM, *Adv. Mgr.*

SPRING AND MACDOUGAL STREETS, NEW YORK CITY

WITH "EVERYBODY'S" PUBLISHERS

AN ANSWER AND AN ANSWER

In this department last month we advocated a vigorous censorship of plays. Lincoln Steffens, returning from abroad after the magazine was on the presses, read what we were printing, did not approve of it, and said so. The points he made were so interesting that we asked him to set them down. Before reading them, may we suggest, with some diffidence, that you read again what we said in the October "Publishers." And after you have read what we said last month, and what Mr. Steffens says here, and our rejoinder, we shall be mighty glad, if the spirit moves you, to have you send us your own conclusion on this very important subject. Lay aside your prejudice before reading Mr. Steffens's answer.

MY DEAR RIDGWAY:—

Free speech is not an acute issue in this country. It should be, and it is bound to be. Free speech always becomes an acute issue when a spirited people realize that they haven't free speech. And we Americans haven't it.

We believe we have. And most of us have. Most of us are free to say whatever we think. But we haven't thought very freely. We have been too busy with facts and acts and things to pay much heed to ideas and theories and ideals. But a change is coming over us. We are beginning to think. I mean that we, the people, are beginning to think. So far our thinking has been quiet—a sort of brooding. We are thinking to ourselves. But that can not last. We shall soon be thinking out loud; we shall soon be wanting to tell one another what we have been telling ourselves. And when we do that; when we all begin to express freely the various thoughts our broodings have been breeding—then, my dear Ridgway, we shall all discover what a few of us realize to the full already: that we have not free speech in the United States—not by a long way. And we shall want it. And then free speech will be an issue here—alive, acute, misunderstood.

I say "misunderstood" because it is misunderstanding that makes live issues acute. Other failings help. But it is not ill will, for example; it is mainly misconception that throws the blinding fire of hate into great controversies, lines men up on sides, and keeps them fighting, often splendidly, for the wrong—for what they would see was not right, if they could see.

Wouldn't it be well, then, if you and I, two good friends, could serve to formulate, before it is fully alive, the inevitable issue of free speech?

You gave the opportunity when you wrote your editorial for the October number, and when, having heard me out upon it, you asked me to answer it. You raised the issue then, and you raised it in the very form in which it is most likely to be misunderstood.

You would limit free speech for the sake of the right.

And that's not right. That's wrong.

"There were two shows running in New York last summer," you say, "which should not have been permitted by the authorities." And you advocate "a vigorous censorship."

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I didn't see those shows. If I had, I might have disagreed with you about them. A doubt of your own judgment seems to have crossed your own mind. "We hope we are not prudish," you say. Maybe you were. Mayor Gaynor might have thought you were; the policemen he put on duty at those theatres might have thought you were; and a majority of the spectators might have disagreed with you. And the difficulty of arriving at an agreement in a question of morality or of setting up a criterion and of finding an arbiter in matters of taste is a very practical part of the problem of censorship. Indeed, it is right there that this method has always failed and probably always will break down.

Any censorship by authority is unsatisfactory.

But I am not interested in the practical problem—not now. As I admitted above, the question isn't a live one—not yet. When it is, we shall all help to deal with it practically. And this is as much as to say that I, utterly opposed to any censorship whatsoever, would be willing, if we, the people, should decide to *try* one, to assist at the election of a censor. I should not mind doing wrong, if the wrong were acknowledged. I am more interested in thinking, than in doing, right; in theory than in practise; and it's the theory of censorship that we are censoring just now.

FREEDOM ISN'T ALL WE WANT

So, to lift the principle clear to view, I will assume that your two shows were unfit to be seen; that they should not have run; and that a censorship by authority is practicable. Even so, we don't want that. We want a free stage; free speech; liberty.

We don't want any censorship at all at all.

By "we," I mean you: you, and I, and our readers; I mean Man. I mean that we all have a sound instinct against force. You express it.

"Our instincts," you say, "are all against censorship." And you go on to speak out boldly for free speech: "We believe in the widest possible latitude to free thought, free expression, and free action."

You want liberty, and so do all of us. And we want it, not alone for ourselves, as the wits so plausibly sneer. It is not for our own thought only that we desire no limitation. We all should like to ensure freedom of thought, expression, and action for all. The world is fair.

But the world wants something else more than it wants liberty.

And the world is right, I think. And it seems to me that it is there that misunderstanding sets in. At any rate, it is there that the radicals go wrong. Free-speech cranks set up liberty as the end of all human effort, as the highest good, and, logically enough thereafter, call all men illiberal who would infringe upon liberty for the sake of any other good: good taste, for example; "decency" or "morality." That is narrow-minded, they say, and they hate narrow-mindedness. Well, they are narrow-minded and, in combination with the "moralist," breed hate. How can we keep out the hate?

I think that, if we could bridge over in the public mind the "differences" latent here, we might break by a little the force of that fury which is otherwise bound to burn up the truth in the impending free-speech controversy. And the premise to begin on is that which makes liberty the highest good.

Liberty is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end.

OBSCENITY AND FREE SPEECH

I am one of a group of men who organized recently a Free Speech League. We propose to stand for absolute, unlimited freedom of expression. You understand? The purpose of the Free Speech League is to make it possible for anybody to say anything anywhere. That's free speech; that's the ideal; that's liberty. It may sound like license, but let's not get tangled in words. Anything less than absolute freedom of speech is not liberty. And this league is for absolute liberty.

But that does not mean that we are for anything wrong. In looking around for a place to take hold to begin our work, we are rather inclined to begin on "obscenity." There was a practical objection to "a fight for obscenity." That is what it *could* be called, and you can see that the point of the issue might cloud the issue. The public mind *might* get the impression that we were indeed fighting, not for freedom of speech, but for indecency. But the same confusion might arise if we should stand for the right of Socialists to march and Anarchists to speak. We might be thought to be backing

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Socialism and Anarchism; not liberty in general, but liberty for a particular group or cause. We have to begin with some extreme cause; no other is unpopular enough to make clear that we are out for liberty. No decision was reached by the League in the matter, I believe, so I can speak only for myself. I was, and am, for the first stand on "obscenity:" for the right for any one to say, write, publish, and distribute, sing, act, or otherwise express anything, "moral" or "immoral." Why?

WANTED: A NORMALLY GOOD, FREE RACE

I don't want to say or write anything "obscene" or "immoral." I hate all that sort of thing. I feel as you do about indecency. And I'm not a "crank" on liberty, as you see. I no more believe in freedom for sweet freedom's sake than I do in art for art's sake or morality for goodness' sake. Like you, and, as I find (to my surprise and, I think, to theirs), like my colleagues in the Free Speech League, I am for something else more than I am for free speech.

We all are for the right.

That's vague, of course. We don't any of us know just what is right. Best leave it so. We can get to the point the better by not defining "the right" too precisely and positively. But negatively, I think, we shall agree that it is not an abstraction we want. We want, not decency, but freely decent men and women; not goodness, but naturally moral people; and not good taste, but citizens having quite unconsciously pretty good taste. In other words:

Morality and liberty are but means to an end: a normally good, free race.

That's what you want. "As long," you say, "as even a few are willing to risk lowering the national morale by vulgarly flaunting the delicacies in order to make a few infected dollars, we favor a vigorous censorship."

As long as a few abuse liberty, you are against liberty. As long as a few speak too freely, you are against free speech. As long as there is evil in the world, you would do wrong in order to right it.

That's what you say, in heat. But do you mean it? I think not. You quote Jesus later on; you appeal to the Master. Well, He didn't believe in that. He was against the use of force altogether, and a censorship by authority is compulsion. It is force.

And force is wrong; it is the wrong way to get the right.

Which is where we differ, you and I, two good friends; and the potential enemies that take sides with you or me, they will split there. We differ only as to the method of achieving a good end that we are all making for. Why can't we agree upon the way to take? You hate your method; you are against censorships and restraints: force. You like my method: free thought, free expression, free action: free morality. Where is the hitch?

Pardon me if I guess that it lies in this: that you don't see a free way of achieving both liberty and goodness; free men who are moral. I think I do.

Take obscenity, for an example. You would abolish it off the earth, if you could; so would I. We must if we are to have a free and wholesome people. You would suppress it by force. That would be the quicker way, but it isn't sure. It has only served to drive obscenity out of sight. My way is slower, but, I think (and I think you will think), sure. I would let it appear. I would let it come out. I would do about obscenity as I would with any other evil: I would treat the symptoms mildly, and look for the cause and its cure. And the cause of obscenity is ignorance and mystery. Why not cure ignorance with knowledge and so dissipate the mystery? That's easy. "Youth is wide-eyed," you say. It is. Youth is curious about sex. So is all untaught ignorance. I find that "good" men and women are much more eager to know about evil than so-called bad men and women. The bad people know things. There is no mystery to them about the facts of sex, and no obscene curiosity. And there is no obscenity in these facts. They are plain, interesting, important, natural, universal, and beautiful. Why not write them, picture them, present them as they are?

Knowledge of so-called obscene facts would kill all obscene curiosity about them.

THE CURE FOR EVIL IS KNOWLEDGE

There is evidence to show that if we would begin before puberty to teach the children the truth of all this, frankly, simply, without any sense of exceptional privacy, we should defeat obscenity; we should achieve a free, freely decent people who would

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be no market for commercial indecencies. And that's the right way to censor books and plays and pictures.

The public must do all the censoring that is done.

Too long? I admitted that this was a slow way. But it is sure. It is right. It is Christian. It is democratic. It is the method to apply to all our evils. It is the method of getting people to want to be right or, rather, not to want to be wrong. Why aren't the leaders of men willing to trust it?

I can understand why the rulers of men are impatient to employ the powers they possess to compel quickly, by force, what they think is right. I can even understand why the people themselves speak so often in the spirit of autocracy. "Let's pass a law against this or that," they say.

The people have learned, from their leaders and rulers, the false notion of making people good by force of law.

But it is a constant source of dull amazement to me, with a tongue in my mouth and a pen in my hand, to hear preachers, teachers, and editors forever appealing to force: petitioning Government for summary legislation and calling upon authority to enforce such laws. Have we no jealousy of our prerogative? No faith in God and natural laws? No belief in the teachings of Jesus? No hope in Man, who is so reluctant to be driven, so willing, so very, very willing to be led?

No, my dear Ridgway, neither you nor I—"we" do not believe in "a vigorous censorship." "We," the editors, believe in criticism: in free reports of all the facts; in liberal thought about them; and in the power of the suggestion of reason and good feeling to carry us forward slowly, without hate and without compulsion, through liberty and morality, to a manhood and a womanhood that will know how to take care of themselves, themselves and their children, their cities, their theatres, pictures, and—their magazines.

LINCOLN STEFFENS.

If you have caught the spirit and meaning of Mr. Steffens's answer, you are impressed no less by its depth and breadth than by its honesty and kindliness. It is a remarkable contribution.

We appear to be in agreement as to objective. We are striving for the same goal. We differ with Mr. Steffens only as to methods. We admit, frankly, we do not like ours, and we do like Mr. Steffens's. We do not like censorship and we do like freedom. As we said in October, we believe in the widest possible latitude to free thought, free expression, and free action.

HOW MUCH FREEDOM CAN WE STAND?

It comes to this: We believe in the widest *possible* latitude; Mr. Steffens believes in the *widest latitude*. He says: "I am for the right for any one to say, write, publish, and distribute, sing, act, or otherwise express anything, 'moral' or 'immoral.'"

We answer, that is not possible—not yet. We hope it will be some day. We seem to be growing toward it. But if we were to try it too soon, civilization might slip back hundreds of years.

Consider by what methods society has reached the present stage. Has it not been through decent and honest people's combining, and restraining the indecent and dishonest? Where should we have arrived if no restraints had ever been put on speech and action?

Can you imagine a race growing from barbarism to civilization, gradually overcoming the natural instincts to thieving and murder, without restraints?

That we want freedom now, that we feel we are strong enough to cast off more of the restraints, is a splendid sign of our growth, and ought to be most encouraging to all of us, but "as long," we quote from October, "as even a few are willing to risk lowering the national morale by vulgarly flaunting the delicacies in order to make a few infected dollars, we favor a vigorous censorship."

But our October editorial did not discuss thieving and murder. Flaunting the delicacies is different, and Mr. Steffens offers a constructive program. A method much slower, he admits, but more effective, he believes, than censorship. He holds that if everybody is free to say, sing, or act anything, "moral" or "immoral," in due time the "immoral" will perish for want of an audience.

It would not occur to us to dismiss the police and leave the homes unlocked, to

With "Everybody's" Publishers is continued on Page 80 of the Advertising Section.

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